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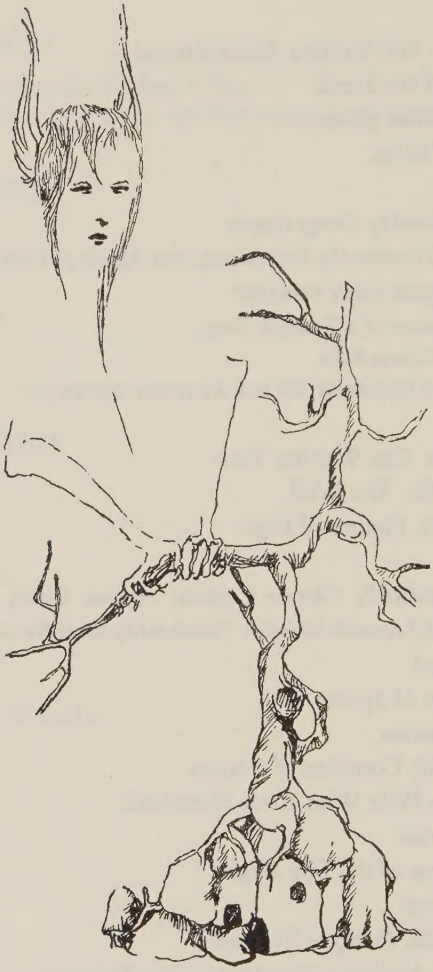

Drawing by Kaffe Fasset

For Varvara Alexandrovna

by Salvatore Quasimodo

The dry branch of a birch tree
beats on my window in whirling Moscow.
In the dark Siberia lets loose a shining wind
against the foamy glass, to weave a plot,
to play the abstract music of my mind.
I'm sick. I can die from one minute to the next.
I go with you, Varvara Alexandrovna,
making the rounds on little felt shoes
with your quick eyes, my nurse of chance.
I am not afraid of death
just as I have never feared life.
I think somebody else is laid out here.
Maybe if I can forget love and pity,
the earth that nature grinds away,
the pale sound of solitude, I can let go of life.
In the dark your hands burn me, Varvara
Alexandrovna. You have the fingers of my mother
pressing hard to leave the long peace
after violence. You are the human Russia
of the times of Tolstoy and Mayakovsky.
You are Russia; not this country of snow
caught now in a hospital mirror.
You are a multitude of hands reaching for others.

Translated by George Garrett: published by permission of Salvatore Quasimodo.

Sin of the Lamb

by Raymond Lee

'It hurts, Baker, it hurts!'

Willa Mae's dry cry outlandish against Baker's wet kiss.

'Relax, Willa Mae baby. I love you, honey. You know that. I wouldn't hurt you for the world. But, baby, there's a little hurt in everything, even making love.'

Willa Mae's second cry stuck in her throat.

Baker's body her body, face her face, breath her breath. Am I Baker? Baker's beautiful and brown and strong and I'm weak and plain and white as a plate in Joe's grill. Baker you're driving me into the floor! I'm afraid of the hurt. I'm afraid of the pain even if it makes me beautiful as you, Baker!

The bed jerking out screeches and Willa Mae's memory jerking back to Pa wringing a chicken's neck for the Sunday supper. Pa's voice itching through the squeaks.

'Willie Mae!'

Hugging the hurt she dug her finger nails into Baker's back.

'Willie Mae, come rub your old Pa's aching back with the liniment. Willie Mae, come rub me, sweetie.'

The liniment. In the sticky bottle. Hateful smell. Moldy hay smell doused with kerosene smell. Hateful !

'Willie Mae, now that your poor Ma's gone you gotta take up her duties. Come rub me, sweetie, rub me with the hot liniment to warm my cold bones.'

The liniment burning her hands as they rubbed the wrinkled skin, the skin sopping up the liniment, dead skin. And then Pa's fingers on her leg boned as a crab's and drawing up goose bumps as they tried to crawl up under her dress. The liniment burning and Pa squirming and the crab losing its grip.

Pa'd kill us both if he could see us now. Thank God he's gone with Ma. But maybe his memory will kill us.

Baker, let me go! Give me back myself. I will be dead in you and you will be my murderer. They will hang you. And I love you. I love you honey boy. My only love against the liniment and Pa. And now it's killing me. The pain and fear and the screeches.

Rag-like Willa Mae's hands slouched away from Baker's back. A smile on her sweating face. Her tears sweet in their mouths.

I am out of you Baker. I am on the gray ceiling where rain stains

crawl out of the corners like spiders. I hang in the air with the bed below a cross. A cross!

Jesus save me!

Baker's hand shutting Willa Mae's mouth. Baker's breath flooding the tiny room until its seams swelled. Baker crying out now for help and then falling away from Willa Mae with the helplessness of a beaten rug.

Quiet and sweat and tears and stains and then Preacher Punzy's voice grating on the dead years with the monotony of an old gate and Willa Mae listening, drawing the cover over Baker's nakedness, laying back to watch the cross glow on the ceiling.

How does fear listen?

'Willa Mae, you know that Jesus Christ suffered and died on the Cross to save us from sin, us born in sin, had to be redeemed from sin or perish forever in the eternal fire. Now, here in this bed, with this naked boy you have driven another nail into Jesus's hands. And what if the seed from this boy sprouts in you? What of the child, the lamb conceived in this sin? Repent, Willa Mae, ask Jesus forgiveness and get out of that bed and never see this naked boy again!'

Willa Mae slid from the bed to her knees, eyes at the ceiling where the cross had vanished, the cross made by the headlight-flash through the shuttered window. She cried in sweat and shaking her body had never before known. And then quickly she stuffed herself in her clothes and stumbled from the hot motel room, not looking back for even her shadow.

She wavered in the stillness and the moonlight washing the desert with the hands of a prophet. Silver mists were uplifted to the purple mountains and the mountains pushed them up to the creamy clouds and the clouds sweetened them for the stars that would never feel even their dying desire.

Suddenly she heard the beat of her heart like the beat of a motor. The bus. To Phoenix. It probably stopped near the gas station. Her shadow stumbling before her, Willa Mae ran for the hot night pressing against her from the hot highway and the lonely stretching beyond with the mountains frowning on both sides.

Willa Mae crouched in the white hospital bed remembering and wanting to cry and finding only an emptiness for the fullness to speak

for her heart. But Baker's last words as they had waited for the ambulance to come, a strange kind of comfort:

'The kid really isn't a bastard, Willa Mae. We just couldn't wait to get a license we were so in love.'

A white piece of paper. A white sheet. A white cloud at the window. A nurse in the doorway and all whiteness and purity standing beside her.

'We're ready for you now, Mrs. Baker Pollard.'

My baby must be born pure. Maybe my pain will purify him. Maybe if they don't give me a pain-killer the Lord will forgive the sin.

Uplifted like the silver mists.

I don't want a pain-killer!

Breathe deep.

I don't want a pain-killer.

I'll hate him, I'll hate him if the sin is born with him.

The nurse slid the white bundle in beside Willa Mae. Willa Mae unfolding the white bundle, letting little fingers worm her neck, her breasts, and lips ringing her teat, his sucking her heart.

Their apartment was small with a wall bed but neat and clean and with a window that let Willa Mae watch Baker walk home from the garage two blocks away. The sun was there so long it saved on the light bill and the moon when it was full was a good stand-in. Willa Mae came home to it with smiles and a bundle of joy. And Baker was extra special in his clumsy way and predicted they'd make a record for happiness nobody in the whole U.S. could top.

But the fear showed up in little Paul's diapers. They couldn't afford to send them out. And how Willa Mae hated washing them. She never seemed to get them clean. And when they'd hang on the line she always saw the dirty spot. Even when Old Lady Standford from next door said she never saw diapers so white, Willa Mae used twice the amount of soap on the diapers. But the spot still showed.

Was the stain a mark of the sin?

She woke at night with a headache and even the white sheets between her and Baker seemed spotted and sometimes even the moon.

Little Paul never liked the diapers. Always squirming and kicking them off. Always pushing his nakedness up in Willa Mae's face every time she changed him. Like he was proud of his dangling nakedness.

Once Willa Mae spanked him but he cried so pitiful she bathed him with her lilac hand lotion Aunt Emmy had sent for Xmas and kissed his little belly until he laughed.

One sweaty Sunday afternoon Baker lay on the bed drinking beer and listening to the ball game and little Paul big-eyed beside him. Baker would tickle him once in a while and whistle in his ear and pat his bottom.

'Bottom's wet, Ma, need a change.'

Willa Mae was ironing in the kitchen. Her legs and arms ached. Her back was strung on a wire She wished for the coolness of the tiny stream that used to wind through their backyard.

'Bottom's wet, Ma, second call.'

She grabbed up a diaper still warm from the iron. Baker stretched on his back crunching a handfull of pretzels. Little Paul's legs were busy as a wig-wag. Willa Mae's hands shook. The pins dropped on the bed. Her head reeled.

'Oh, Baker, you do it, I'm so nervous today I think I'll scream.'

Baker smiled up, the big Baker smile with lots of teeth. Even tossing around on the bed Baker looked beautiful, the black curls always just so, the brown eyes bright as a movie star's. Through the shorts Baker's loins curved up.

'Let's do it, baby.'

Baker's big hands held up little Paul's legs and Willa Mae started to slide the diaper under his swaying bottom while little Paul gurgled like a freshly opened pop bottle.

'His little peter looks like a bell on a monkey's cap.'

Holding the baby's hands in one hand he took it between his fingers and played with it.

'Be a long time before you outgrow your old man's, son. How about that, Willa Mae?'

The sun blasting through the windows. The morning bacon sour in her throat. Willa Mae dropped the diaper and mumbled she thought she was going to throw up and moved to the bathroom.

'Must have been that tuna we had last night, baby. You gotta be careful of tuna.'

She flushed the toilet as she threw up, the tears salty on her lips, her eyes burning. She dashed water in her face and then in

the mirror saw the little worm wriggling in Baker's fingers again.

The motel room. The bed. The cross on the ceiling.

Oh, Jesus, the sin was there all the time. I only covered it with a pretended whiteness. What am I to do?

From the Martins' apartment 'Love is a Simple Thing' shouldered the hot quiet with the stupidity of a drunk.

The days were long and tired and gray despite the sun and the nights had a moon without silver. And Willa Mae prayed and asked guidance from the Lord but usually her prayers were stifled by Baker's body consuming even the air in the small apartment.

One clouded afternoon Willa Mae lay on the divan by the window. Through the shade the heat was sickening. Little Paul sprawled in his bed shaking the sweaty silence with his rattle. Willa Mae watched him for a while and then dozed off.

Suddenly the chiming clock in Old Lady Standford's struck five and Willa Mae tried to jerk herself out of her sleep but she was numb and kinked from head to foot. She stared out the sleep-blur from her eyes and looked across to the crib. She tried to scream but got only hot air heavy with the Martins' corned beef.

Little Paul lay naked in his crib. Somehow he'd worked his diaper off. He was sucking his thumb and his hand had a hold of his dingle and was pulling it up and down just as Baker had done. His little behind went up and down too. And in the shadow a redness glowed over his nakedness that was like a veil from hell.

Willa Mae grabbed up her hair brush and yanked him from the crib and beat his behind until the skin was broken and creased with his blood and his howling a rip in a rotten blanket, then she flung him back into the crib and shoved it into the bathroom and slammed the door.

The phone rang.

'Honey, gotta rush job, won't be home till late. How's my big little Paul?'

Heart like a motor. Skin razored with nerves. Eyes blind looking at the rose wallpaper. Words coming like the blind but words to satisfy Baker.

After the phone Willa Mae turned the radio on loud and finished her work.

About seven o'clock Willa Mae peeked into the bathroom. Little

Paul was sleeping and his little bottom was red as a tomato and swollen. She wanted to get the lilac lotion but suddenly she smelt the old liniment smell and heard Pa's voice creaking.

'Willa Mae, rub your old Pa's back again.'

She closed the door and pulled down the wall bed.

Jesus, help me to redeem my baby.

'Baker?'

'Sure, baby. You wasn't expecting anybody else, was you?'

'You been drinking.'

'I been working. Gotta wash that grease out of my throat somehow. But best of all with your kisses, baby.'

'No, Baker, not tonight. Little Paul's been sick. I'm sick too.'

He ripped the nightgown onto the floor.

'The hell you are!'

'I didn't mean that. I'm sick inside.'

Baker prowling around in the darkness like a bear.

'Any beer in the refrigerator?'

'No.'

'What you got the kid in the bathroom for?'

'It's cooler in there.'

The silence walking around the room like a prisoner.

'O.K. baby, little old Baker will cure your inside sickness.'

Willa Mae fought his arms and lips and then suddenly he slumped away from her drunker than she had thought. She slid from the bed and gathering little Paul out of the crib went to the divan dragging a sheet. She stretched out and watched the moon rise and felt little Paul's mouth on her breast and in this moment Willa Mae found her baby's redemption.

I'll deny Baker and in my denial my little lamb will be purified. The sin came from Baker. The redemption will come from Baker. I'll never sleep with Baker again.

The days were short and bright and happy for Willa Mae. She played for hours with little Paul. She loved him until the breath was out of her. But the days were long and weary and tense for Baker who drank more and more and cursed and one night cried and begged for Willa Mae's body. But she slept on the divan with her baby beside her and a peace slept beside her and her heart was full of a ringing hymn.

Then little Paul got a cold and was restless as a feather and she had to let him sleep in his crib. But she believed he was safe from the sin now. And maybe the crib was the place for him after all. These were her thoughts as she stretched on the divan waiting for Baker to come home, wondering how Baker could be redeemed too.

She heard him floundering in the hall. He almost fell on the door. She dragged him to the bed and half undressed him. He sank into a snoring sleep. She stretched out again on the divan.

Old Lady Standford's clock was at one again.

Then Baker's mouth her mouth, breath her breath, body her body. Her scream choked her. Baker's hands severed her and a blow on the side of her head knocked her unconscious.

Old Lady Standford's clock hitting two.

Baker's sweating body sliding to the floor. Willa Mae staggering to the bathroom, the light blinding her, staring into the mirror water running her face into silvery splinters.

And in the mirror. Little Paul's bed dragged out of the shadow-straggled darkness. Little Paul's nakedness working up and down, fingers tight around the white hardness.

Willa Mae drifted through the darkness and had the pillow from the divan before she realized it. She held it out gently as if she would catch a butterfly.

I'll catch a soul, my baby's soul. This is the only way now that Baker has entered me again. The pillow so light and fluffy.

Gently she pressed it down into the crib, down, down. No breath. No struggle. No cry. The little body lay still with eyes wide as the pillow floated to the floor. Only stillness in the room now. Stillness in Willa Mae's head too. Then Pa's voice but no words, Pa's voice slipping away like drizzle on the pavement. Never hear that voice again.

Sleep little soul. Sleep in eternal glory. Sleep in purity.

She leaned over and kissed the half open mouth for a moment, wondering if her breath could breathe him back to life. She covered him with his blue blanket and then went to the window pulling up the shade. The moon silvered the whole sky making it look like a lake. Willa Mae smiled peacefully and then stared past the crib and into the kitchen where little Paul's high clair rippled white in the moonlight. The chair looked so big; big enough for her to sit in it.

Poems | by Giuseppi Ungaretti

WHISPERS OF SOBS

Words
of lost souls
return to me
as they pass
through faltering canebrakes
along the road
stripped
on the back of solitude.

And they end by dying out
in the rolling
of stone boulders
made lighter by the darkness
crouching
at sky's rim
coldly
like a majolica
etching
sharp mouth
of crevice.

BOREDOM

To whom should one give
a drop of indolent
humanity's weeping?

A life's mercy

Houses keep apart
not to disturb me

Thread of moist heat at the neck

Eyes
of sauntering odalisques with parasol

How immovable is the air

The litany of numbers on closed doors
that I follow to accompany me

This night too will pass

This gadding life
Faltering shadow of trolley car wires
on the dank asphalt

I gaze at moon-faces of hack drivers wavering

Sleep comes
so cautiously
for a moment to take me away

IRONY

I hear spring in the black aching branches.
Only at this hour can one follow it, passing
between houses, alone with one's thoughts.
It is the hour of closed windows, but this sadness
of returning has taken away my sleep.
Tomorrow morning, a green veil will soften these trees,
as night came a short while ago they were dry.
God gives himself no peace.
Only at this hour can the rare dreamer
pursue his work in torment.
Although it is April, it snows in the city tonight.
There is no greater cruelty than cold silent faces.

Translated by George Garrett.

WANDERER

Nowhere
on earth
am I
at home

In each
untried climate
that I encounter
I find myself
longing
where
once
I had been
already inured

And I leave it always
a stranger

Arising
and returned from ages
too much lived

Even to enjoy
a minute of life
at its beginning

I pursue a land
still innocent

Translated by Sonia Raiziss and Alfredo de Palchi.

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Lila de Nobili

Design by Lila de Nobili

Lila de Nobili is part Roumanian, part Italian, lives in Paris. Marcel Vertès is her uncle; she studied long with Christian Bérard. Her first important theatrical designs were in Paris just after the war: Cocteau's French adaptation of *A Streetcar Named Desire* was one of the first. In 1956 she threw a lot of theatrical tradition (and much rubbish) overboard when she designed a new *La Traviata* for Callas at La Scala. She moved the time up to bustled 1879, saw Violetta as a kind of Marie Bashkirtseff. Her *L'Arlésienne* for Raymond Rouleau in 1957 is already a legend. She designed the Ashton-Henze *Undine* for Covent Garden, a pretty *Midsummer Night's Dream* for the Old Vic, *La Bohème* for the Spoleto Festival of 1960. Lila de Nobili has an odd kind of double vision: local and temporal exactitude is coupled with the frankly theatrical. A modern precision for details goes hand in hand with an enthusiasm for the romantic grandeurs of the 19th century theatre. No better illustration of her talents exists than her *La Bohème:* the period correctness of Mimi's black shawl, dress, high shoes; the artists' shabbiness, the wintry mists of the studio and café were framed by side wings painted with faded pansies and marguérites as on a plush album cover. The total effect was touching and memorable. E.W.

Design by Lila de Nobili

The House of a Spanish Dog

A short story for those who are fond of dreaming

by Sato Haruo

Frate starts running all of a sudden and waits for me at the parting of the road that leads to the blacksmith's. He is a very clever dog and has been my friend for years. I am convinced that he is far cleverer than most men, not to mention my wife. So I take Frate with me whenever I go for a walk. Once in a while he leads me to some quite unexpected spot. That is the reason that when I go for a walk these days I do not have any set destination in mind but follow obediently wherever my dog leads me. So far I have never been down the side-street that goes to the blacksmith's. Very well, today I shall follow the dog down there. So I turn in that direction.

The narrow road is on a gentle slope which occasionally makes sharp twists. I walk along behind my dog, not looking at the scenery, nor thinking, but simply letting myself indulge in idle fancies. Now and then I look up and observe the clouds in the sky. Suddenly some flowers by the roadside catch my attention. I pick a few and hold them to my nose. I do not know what they are called but they smell good. I walk along twisting them between my fingers. Frate happens to notice them. He stops for a moment, tilts his head to the side and gazes into my eyes. He seems to want them. I throw them down for him. He sniffs at the flowers, and glances up at me as if to say that he wishes they were dog biscuits. Then he starts running down the road once more.

I walk along like this for nearly two hours. We seem to be climbing considerably and before long I can command quite a good view. Below the open fields that stretch out before me I can vaguely make out some town in the distance between the mist and the clouds. I stand there for some time gazing at it. Yes, it is certainly a town. But what town can possibly be lying over there with all those houses? There is something rather peculiar about the whole scene. I am totally ignorant about the geography of these parts, however, and there is really nothing so surprising about seeing an unfamiliar town. I look down the other side of the hill. It slopes down gently into the distance. The entire surface is covered with dense thickets. It is shortly before noon and the gentle spring sun shines like smoke, like scent, through the fresh green foliage and on to the slender trunks of the oaks, the chestnut trees and the silver birches. The balance of the shade and the sun on the tree-trunks and on the ground is beautiful beyond words. I feel like going into the depths of

© *Unesco, 1961*

that forest. The undergrowth must be very dense, but it is surely not impenetrable.

My friend Frate seems to be thinking along the same lines. He advances merrily into the forest and I follow him. When we have gone a little over 100 yards, the dog begins to walk in a different way. He abandons his easy gait and busily moves his legs forward as if he were weaving. He thrusts his nose forward. He must have found something. Is it a rabbit's footprints, or can he have found a bird-nest lying in that thick grass? For a few moments he hurries to and fro restlessly. Then he seems to find the right path and walks straight ahead. My curiosity is slightly aroused and I follow him. From time to time we startle the wild birds who are mating amidst the branches.

After we have walked along at a rapid pace for about half an hour, Frate suddenly comes to a halt. At the same moment I seem to hear the gurgling sound of running water. (This part of the country abounds in springs.) Jerking his ears irritably, Frate walks back a few yards, sniffs the ground once again and then sets off to the left. I am surprised to find how deep the forest is. I had never imagined that there were such vast thickets in this part of the country. From the look of it there must be almost 700 acres of woods. My dog's peculiar behaviour and the endless forest combine to fill me with curiosity. After another half an hour or so of walking, Frate stops once again. He gives out a couple of staccato barks. Until this moment I had not noticed it, but now I see that a house is standing directly in front of me. There is something very strange about it. Why should anyone have a house in a place like this? For this is no ordinary charcoal shed such as one finds in the forests.

A quick glance tells me that there is nothing in the way of a garden; the house blends abruptly into the woods. 'Blends' is indeed the only word, for as I have said I came upon the house all of a sudden and could not catch a glimpse of it from the distance. The house has clearly been built in such a position that it can only be seen when one is standing directly before it. As I walk closer I see that it it quite a commonplace sort of house. At the same time, it is rather hard to put my finger on exactly what type of house it is. It has a thatched roof, but it is not like an ordinary farm house. The windows are all glazed in the Western style. Since I cannot see any entrance, I gather that we must be facing the back and the side. From where I stand I notice that the two side walls

are half covered with ivy. This is the only embellishment to give the house any interest or character.

At first I thought it was a lodge, but it is too big for that and, besides, this wood does not seem large enough to require a keeper. Well, if it isn't a lodge, what can it be? Whatever happens I must go in and have a look. I can say that I have lost my way. No doubt they will offer me a cup of tea, and Frate and I will eat the box-lunch that I have brought.

With this in mind I walk round to the front of the house. Until now my sense of sight seems to have submerged my sense of hearing, but suddenly I realize that there is a stream nearby. The gurgling sound that I heard earlier must have come from near here. When I reach the front, I find that, like the rest of the house, it directly faces the forest. There is one peculiar thing about it, however: it is far more luxuriously built than the other parts of the building. Four fine stone steps lead up to the front door. This stone is far older than the remainder of the house and it is thickly overgrown with moss.

The house faces south and beneath the front window a row of small red roses grows along the wall. They stand there with a proprietary air. The flowers are in full bloom and I have the impression that they blossom regardless of the season. And that is not all. From under the clump of roses flows a stream of water, the width of a sash, glittering brightly in the sun. At first glance it looks as if the water were flowing out of the house itself. My retainer Frate starts lapping the water avidly; he evidently finds it delicious.

Now I quietly walk up the steps. I can clearly hear the sound of my shoes against the stone, but they do not really disturb the quiet of the surrounding scene. Playfully I mutter to myself, 'I am now visiting the house of a hermit, or perhaps of a magician.' I look round and see Frate standing there nonchalantly with his pink tongue hanging out and his tail wagging.

In the Western manner I knock on the Western-style door. There is no answer. I have to knock again. Still no answer. This time I call out, 'May I come in?' There is not the slightest reaction. Is the owner out, I wonder, or is the house completely unoccupied? I am overcome by a rather weird feeling. I go to the front window where the roses are growing–for some reason I walk as quietly as possible–and standing on tiptoe look inside the house.

The window has a heavy, dark maroon curtain decorated with blue lines. Obviously of very good quality, it does not go with the rest of the house. The curtain has been partly pulled aside and I can see clearly into the room. To my surprise I find a large stone basin, about two feet high, standing in the middle of the room. Water is gushing up from the centre of the basin and pouring constantly over the sides. The basin is overgrown with moss. The floor, too, is of stone and it looks rather damp. (When I think about it later, I realize that the water spilling over the edge of the basin is the same glittering water that I saw slithering out like a snake from among the roses.)

That basin really amazes me. Although I have felt from the beginning that there was something rather peculiar about the house, I never expected to find such a weird device inside. A new surge of curiosity comes over me and I start carefully examining the inside of the house through the window. The floor is made of some pale stone whose name I do not know. Round the basin where it is wet it has taken on a beautiful blue colour. In laying out the floor they evidently used the stone just as it came from the quarry; there is something peculiarly natural about the surface. On the wall furthest from the entrance there is a fireplace also made of stone, and to the right I notice three bookshelves with what look like dishes piled on top. At the other end of the room, near the window where I am standing, is a large plain desk, and on the desk – yes, what is on the desk? I bring my face as close to the glass as possible, but the window is so shaped that I cannot see. Oh, wait a moment! This house is far from being deserted. Indeed, someone must have been here only a moment ago. For on the corner of that desk lies a cigarette butt and from it, very gently, rises a thread of smoke; it goes up vertically for about two feet, then starts wavering and, as it goes higher, becomes more and more disturbed.

Amidst all the unexpected happenings of today's walk I have completely forgotten about smoking. Now I am reminded of it and I take a cigarette out of my pocket and light it. At the same moment my desire to enter the house and have a look becomes quite irresistible. I think carefully for a few moments and make up my mind. Yes, I shall go in. Even if the owner happens to be out. In case he comes back and finds me, I'll explain my reason to him honestly. Since he is leading such a peculiar existence in any case, I am sure he won't object to my uninvited visit. He

may even welcome me. The paint-box, which I have taken along on my walks and which has begun to be rather a nuisance, will now turn out to be useful, since it will prove that I am not a thief. No, nothing will stop me: I'm going into this house. Once again I climb the steps to the entrance. As a final precaution I call out, 'Is anyone there?' No answer. Quietly I open the door. It is unlocked.

As soon as I have walked in, I draw back a few steps. For there, lying in the sun under the window, is a coal-black Spanish dog; for the dog, who has been dozing with his chin touching the floor and his body curled in a ball, opens his eyes in a sly, furtive manner when he hears me and sluggishly stands up.

At this, Frate starts growling and walks up to the black dog. For a time they both growl at each other. But the Spanish dog seems to have a peculiarly gentle disposition: after the two dogs have sniffed carefully at each other, it is he who starts wagging his tail. My dog joins in and soon they are both wagging busily. Then the Spanish dog lies down in the same place as before. Frate lies down directly beside him. Strange indeed to see such a friendly attitude between two dogs of the same sex who have only just met each other! Of course Frate has a very amiable nature, but the Spanish dog deserves the main praise for his amazing magnanimity in welcoming a stranger. I feel reassured and walk into the room.

This Spanish dog is unusually large for the breed. He has the characteristically thick, tufty tail and when he winds it up on his back he looks very impressive indeed. From the little I know about dogs I can tell from the lustre of his fur and the look of his face that he is quite old. I walk up to him and pat him on the head by way of paying my respects to my temporary host. From past experience I know that dogs (so long as they are not strays who are in the habit of being badly treated by human beings) tend by nature to be friendly to people. This is especially true of dogs who live in lonely places. Such dogs will never hurt people who are nice to them even if they are complete strangers. Besides, their instinct tells them instantly whether a man is a dog-lover or the type that is likely to treat dogs unkindly. My theory proves to be correct, for the Spanish dog now happily starts licking my hand.

This is all very well, but who on earth is the owner of the house? And where is he? Will he be back soon? Despite my resolutions, now that I

am actually in the house I am beginning to have compunctions. I am free to examine the place from top to bottom, but instead I remain standing by the large stone basin. Just as I had expected when I looked through the window, it only comes up to my knees. The brim is about two inches across and is provided with three grooves. The water runs along the grooves, round the outer edge of the basin and then spills on to the floor. Yes, to be sure, in places situated like this house this is one possible way to draw water. No doubt the people who live here use it for drinking water. The basin is certainly no mere ornament.

From the look of things this room seems to be serving several purposes at once. There are one, two, three chairs. Yes, just three–one by the basin, one by the fireplace and one next to the table. They are all practical, down-to earth chairs; neither they nor anything else in the room bespeaks the slightest effort at elaboration. As I continue looking round the room, I feel myself gradually becoming emboldened. I notice that a clock is ticking away the time. Tick-tock, tick-tock–like the pulsation of the quiet house itself. Where can the clock be? It is nowhere on the dark reddish-yellow wall. Ah yes, there it is, standing on the table that I saw from the window. With a slight feeling of diffidence towards the Spanish dog, the temporary master of the house, I walk up to the table. There on the corner lies the cigarette that I saw from outside. By now it has completely burnt out and is nothing but a cylinder of white ash.

Above the dial of the clock is painted a picture. This gives it a toy-like appearance which contrasts curiously with the generally uncouth aspect of the room. I examine the picture. It shows a lady of noble deportment standing next to a gentleman. There is a third member in the party–a boot-black who polishes the left shoe of the gentlemen once each second. A childish picture, but nevertheless interesting. I am no expert where foreign matters are concerned, but from the lady's wide skirt that trails on the floor with its lace frills and from the gentleman's top-hat and side whiskers I gather that the scene depicted on the clock must be some fifty years old. Well, well–what a pathetic fellow that boot-black really is! There he has to crouch in this quiet house, and in the smaller world contained inside this house, and day and night he has to keep on polishing a single shoe. As I observe the monotony of his ceaseless movements, I

feel my own shoulder becoming stiff. The clock says quarter past one; it is one hour slow.

Some four or five dozen dusty books are piled on the table and a couple of others are lying by themselves. All the books are rather bulky–they might be albums of pictures, or books of architecture, or again, atlases. The titles seem to be in German and I cannot understand them. On the wall hangs a heliochrome sea-piece. I've seen this picture before somewhere–isn't that Whistler's colouring? I strongly approve of having such a picture here. Anyone secluded among the hills like this would probably forget that the world contained such things as the sea unless he had a picture to remind him.

I decide to leave the house and go home. Perhaps I'll call again one of these days and meet the real owner. Still, I feel a little uneasy about having entered the house while it was empty and now leaving while it is still empty. On second thoughts, perhaps I'd better wait until he comes back. I watch the water gushing out of the basin and light another cigarette. For some time I stand there gazing at the water. Now that I really absorb myself in it, I seem to hear some sort of music coming from the distance. I listen with admiration and rapture. Can it be that music is actually coming from the depths of this constantly gushing water? The owner of such an unusual house must be an extremely eccentric individual . . . Wait! Is it possible that I have become a sort of Rip Van Winkle? Shall I return home to find that my wife has turned into an old woman? I imagine myself leaving the forest and asking a passing peasant where the village of Kurosaka is. 'Kurosaka?' he answers. 'There's no such place in these parts.' A queer feeling comes over me and I decide to hurry home at once.

I go to the door and whistle for Frate. The Spanish dog, who seems to have been following my every moment, now gazes at me as I prepare to leave. I become frightened. Perhaps that dog has only been pretending to be gentle, and now that he sees me going he may jump on me from behind and bite me. I wait impatiently for Frate to follow me, then I hurry out of the door, carefully watching the Spanish dog, and shut it with a bang.

Before setting out for home, I decide to have a final glance inside the house. I stand on tiptoe by the window and look in. The Spanish dog gets slowly to this feet and walks towards the table.

'Well, that was quite a startling visit I had today', he seems to say to himself in a human voice, evidently unaware of my presence. He yawns in the way that dogs so often do–and then in a twinkling he becomes a middle-aged man in glasses and a black suit who stands leaning against the chair by the desk with a still unlit cigarette in his mouth, and who slowly turns the pages of one of those large books.

It is a very warm spring afternoon. I am in a thicket of trees that nestles among the hushed hills.

Translated by George Saito

BRITISH SHORT STORY COMPETITION FOR WRITERS UNDER THIRTY

The first of what we hope will be frequent contests brought us in over 175 short stories, startling in their diversity of style, subject and tone. Perhaps twenty entries were of real merit and we regret that, as a Quarterly with limited space, we shall only be able to publish half of these.

On page 16 we announce an Essay Contest for young writers in America and we hope to have another in London later in 1962. Meanwhile we welcome any submissions in English from writers on both sides of the Atlantic and no age limit, of course, is stipulated for these.

Results of Britsh Short Story Contest

FIRST PRIZE. VICTOR MANNE

Born in Johannesburg, South Africa, 1935; read for an Arts Degree, and, later, a Degree in Law at the University of Witwatersrand. Came to England, 1959. *The Waiting Time* is his first published story.

SECOND PRIZE. SYDNEY CHEATLE

Born in Dublin, 1936; studied architecture and writes music for modern jazz groups. Has just completed his novel, *Song of the Goat* an extract from which appeared in *Transatlantic Review* No 5.

THIRD PRIZE. ANGUS STEWART

He is 24 and goes down from Oxford this summer, where he read English at Christchurch. Is going to the University of Washington, Seattle, for three months in the autumn. His short stories have appeared in *Isis* and he is working on a novel.

The three prize winning stories are published in this issue.

Specially commended stories, which will be published in later issues, were contributed by: M. Alison Beavis; Richard S. Burns; Edwin Brett; Yvonne Coenca; E. M. Eggleston; Sarah Prinsep; Geoffrey Strachan.

The Waiting Time

by Victor Manne

Just lately she had begun to feel his presence there in the room; not any palpable figment before her (she did not believe in ghosts) but a large easy presence at the back of her, watching her as she dusted, minutely, each corner, each faded photograph; nor did she feel him as he was in those last few weeks, rumbling and coughing into the pillow and filling the room with his low mucous moan, not like that at all. No, she felt him big and easy, lounging about somewhere there behind her, lounging and probably smiling at her dusting so fiercely every unseen nook, lounging large and easy behind her, strong with large hairy arms dangling by his side; sweating perhaps, just come in from the garden where he had been cutting some wood and she used to watch him, his club-like forearms sticking out from his shirt-sleeves and the tendons jumping gently underneath the skin as he pressed the saw down on the wood, dug the teeth in till the wood surrendered and sprayed up the fine sweet-smelling dust; and the house was vibrant with his force. Not as he was in the photograph stiff and pompous; the miserable little photograph, yellow and faded; even when it was new she had hated it. But it was she who had insisted and he had laughed at her silliness; she was silly when she was young.

So much furniture to dust so many secret corners, she felt the warmth of the room weighing down heavily on her shoulders and her head echoed the lazy murmur of bees hovering about near the window, until she had to stop and straighten her back. So much furniture and not enough room, so that brown and clumsily they jostled against each other and one had to sidle in-between or walk only in the bare space in the middle where there was just the thin carpet. And the low ceiling and the heavy droning air pressed down on her forcing her to pant and gasp before continuing on her slow shuffling perambulation. And so many little pieces of pottery grouped together on the mantle-piece each to be rubbed carefully and to be put back in exactly the same place on the shelf and she felt him in that room, in that house, where she had watched him die, waiting all night for him to stop struggling against the burden of insidious death; grown old watching David grow up, grown old small and tired in that room, that house.

That suburb where the house fitted in tight, one in a long row of same sized same-looking little houses facing across a grey strip of road another row of tight white dwellings, facing each other year after year

and each year the children grew older and braver and the parents, older and more hemmed-in, smaller and less brave. She saw the teeth cutting into the wood his arms tense the tendons flicking nervously beneath the skin; then the cruel scratching of the saw would stop and he would split the plank against his knee, crack! Where his forehead flowed into the tight curly hair beads of sweat glistened against the dark red skin and his hands were firm and hard on her arms, soft arms pressed against her sides so that she could not move and had to stare up at him, at his face dark and red and glistening with sweat which she could smell. So many little pieces of pottery, each to be wiped and put back in its place on the shelf, each one, but it was hot pressing down on her in that cramped overcrowded room where the furniture was too brown and too big and the only place where one could move freely was in the space in the middle of the thin dull carpet.

Smell the sweet wood and tangy sweat in the garden shed at the back of the house; feel the fingers about her soft arms and him moving closer, staring down down down into her eyes, closer. Had she brushed that chair or not, she could not remember now, yes yes she must have but it was so long ago that she brushed it down and told him not to drop the ash. No more ash, no more and she was glad because it infuriated her and she would grow tight and nasty when she saw the dirt that he so casually left about him as he scraped the end of his cigarette with his large grubby thumb. Filthy filthy habits and some of them David had now, like burping after a meal. That must be all, just a few flowers in the vases and she was finished in this room. But she felt so tired, felt the dull murmuring pressure on her shoulders, at the back of her neck that at that moment she wished that she was done with the dusting and the wiping for ever, wished to be light and drifting, weightless and drifting in cool dark away from the bright sun that splashed in from the window. Soon though, the children would be back and she must have tea ready for them otherwise David would grumble.

Deeply absorbed in the heavy fragrance of the flowers, clipping steadily away at the thin stalks she remembered how little he left to her own doing, how he took her in his driving urgency, weighty and awkward on top of her in the shed on the hard bench and how she had hated his force, the singleness of his pleasure, the cramped emptyness of the conclusion; snipping and gathering the flowers together until she had

enough for the three vases in the lounge. And how she rebelled and told him that it was crude, brutal.

'But I can't stop myself. I want you . . . so badly at times that I can't stop to think where we are or whether you are going to enjoy it or not. You're here and I need you and that's that.'

'No . . . no like that it's terrible. Surely you must be able to control . . .'

'I don't control anything. You do that, that is your way not mine.' and the sweat was no longer pleasing to smell. She carried the bundle of flowers into the house and laid them out on some newspaper in the middle of the lounge and began to trim them meticulously cutting off each unwanted bud or leaf. But to bend was no longer so easy and when she lifted her head from the floor it suddenly lightened and the room blackened before her sparking with fierce dancing lights so that she had to stop and sit down, gasping. She remembered how he stood and looked at her trying to find her eyes, to secure her attention and she had refused to look back at him, sat on the bench breathing heavily from exertion and the anger which was growing within her prevented her from returning his look; feeling a wall of exclusion surround her, separating her from his force, sitting there in her tight cell of silence staring out of the shed at the green lawn beyond the entrance and him standing by staring down at her. For so long they remained fixed like that until she could no longer feel him by her, until her seclusion had removed him from her presence and she was alone, her mind drumming with anger at his assault, with fierce hate of his power that could force her to surrender, awkward and ungainly on the wooden bench. Then he spoke again and his voice seemed to filter through her as from a great distance and like a prodded anenomea her whole body contracted into a tight ball of tension under the sudden sound.

'Look Sonia, I'm sorry, I really am. It's never happened before, please forget it. I tried to wait until later but . . .'

'But you have nothing, nothing within you that can check you so you just lunge out, you lunge out and take and as I am your wife that entitles you . . . you can do what you want. Well that's right isn't it, isn't it?'

'No no you don't understand, you cannot see it. We are young now, soon we won't have the desire for each other, we'll be strangers to each other and there will be so little left. That's how it happens, I know, I

know I've seen it happen at home, to my own parents. You realise suddenly that there is nothing left to your marriage, that you have wasted all that energy, that you are not young and there is no more time, that you cannot recall back the mutual want that becomes so strong that it clogs up your mind. We dare not waste it now. I love you Sonia, I do so love you and I know that you need me as much as I need you. Don't cramp it.'

But she would hear no more, still tight and unyielding still bruised, and she wanted to be away from him; she stood up

'I don't want . . . don't want that sort of love.'

and ran out of the shed into the bright sun.

At the dinner-table they sat silent staring down at their plates in the fading light of the summer evening and there was a heavy wall between them, each locked up with dismay at the cruel rupture that had so torn them leaving them empty of thought and neither dared to speak, to break into the silence, to start up again the mutual to and fro movement of love; so they sat silent amid the tinkle of crockery carefully eating. And when they had finished he stood up and left her alone in the room and she could still feel the food barely chewed, stuck in her chest. She could hear him moving about in the lounge, rustling the newspaper, lighting a cigarette and then he went outside onto the porch in the dark and she went to bed to weep for what she had just lost.

Her mouth was dry and she struggled to open her eyes closed heavy in her sleep; and when she opened them she saw the flowers lying lifeless on the carpet before her. She could not remember going to sleep, she was always so tired and sleep came unexpectedly in starts and afterwards she could never remember even sitting down; heavy drowning sleep full of voices and movement, faces and bodies standing near her watching her or just passing by like shadows. She could not move from her chair and she watched a heavy droning fly circling around the flowers, circling lazily around the flowers lying on the wet newspaper in the middle of the room and then it disappeared and she could only hear the deep buzz somewhere above her but drawing slowly nearer, nearer to her, humming closer then stop. On her knee it rested thick black, flicking green and it moved nuzzling into her dress until the tiny tickling frightened her and she stood up suddenly and vigorously shook her dress, shook it until the fly shot off. She was quivering, so brittle

now, so easily frightened, so tired of the little shocks, of the continual burden of her senses; her eyes hurt and her feet were painful and her head swimming and dizzy and full of noises and movement. Dark; for dark she longed, for quite dark and an end to the insistent pulse of the blood and the awareness of the senses. She wanted to sit down again and pass off easily into sleep but she rememberred that the children would be coming home soon. She finished arranging the thin flowers in the vases, collected the torn green remains and went to the kitchen.

The afternoon warmth seemed to have melted her bones, she felt so soft and flabby beneath the skin, dragging herself about the kitchen unable to concentrate her mind on even the smallest task without effort; her hands insensitive and clumsy letting slip a knife here, a cup there; her thoughts away so far away from the immediate that she was but a shell wandering aimlessly about the room. And even the knowledge that the children would be home soon did not seem to prod her back into her accustomed pattern. Before, everything would be prepared and she would be waiting for them to come in. But when was before? She felt that this now, as she was now, was as she had always been; this long heat-heavy day seemed to have been with her for all time; only sometimes, in a clear effulgence of light, sometimes there would break through the thickness a space, a space where she lived and breathed freely and there was nothing else around her. She was there, in that space and he too, always he was there. But then the moment would pass and the space close up and she was back again, tired again, struggling in the thickness as she felt she had always been.

At last she was ready and as she laid the table she could hear the muffled thud of the car door and the voices moving passed the window, then the front door opening and the clear sound of their speech jarred on her ears. David, short like his father, with the red face and grim mouth, brushed the wisp of white cottony hair from his face. He came up to her and kissed her lightly on the proffered cheek.

'How have you been Mom? Not too hot for you?'

'It has been very hot. Did you two enjoy yourselves?'

Elaine spoke from the hall-way.

'Not very much.'

'Elaine was not feeling too good this afternoon. I think she should go and lie down.'

'But supper is ready for us.'

'No Mom, let her go and sleep for a while then we can eat.'

Elaine did not stop to listen to their talk, left them there together in the room; and the old woman and her son were silent in each other's company so she busied herself with the preparations for supper feeling him standing near her but avoiding him, avoiding his eyes which she knew would be staring at her. He stared, deep down into her like the father.

'Well then you go and rest as well if we are not going to eat tonight. I'll make myself something.'

'We'll eat just now.'

He left her alone, she could hear him thumping along the carpet to their room where the two of them would sit silent by each other and suddenly she could feel that silence, like a gulf between them, sitting by each other with nothing to say, no words to link together, to stretch across and touch the other. Where had it gone to? What had happened to the electric vibrancy when they were together, his force and her gentle submission? To where had he departed leaving her tight and hateful, alone with herself, alone to tear away at herself until she had destroyed all her power to give way, to relinquish to his will? At first, that long-ago time, which through memories of memories was when recalled etched deep in her mind, at first there was a centre, a deep centre where they met, where there was the conjoining of their separate parts into one and there was such warmth. That day when they moved into the house the sky hung thick and threatening over them, rumbling into the huge void above and they had to hurry because they feared being caught in the storm; in the summer heat they worked in a frenzy to move all the furniture indoors and when they were finished they were red in the face and panting, tense with excitement. The house was one of the first on that flat stretch of brown and from the lounge window they could see clearly to the new muscular water-tower on the ridge, and they peered through the window watching the sky and the few scuttling figures in the gloom. They waited, waited for the world to burst on top of them, ready defiant and the rooms were tangy with the smell of paint. They kissed and she could taste the sweat on his lips, feel the slippery warmth under his skin and then, exhausted, they sat down on the still-rough couch holding hands listening to the murmuring fast-descending dark until, like that, they fell asleep.

And awoke at the crash of thunder; the storm was on them. She felt frightened knowing that they were isolated and tiny away, far far away from everyone and everything else and she clung to him, clung to him in her fear until the thumping of her heart eased and she relaxed. They listened to the rush of water drumming down on the roof, beating insistently against the windows; and when her heart eased and her fear drained out of her she could imagine, without fright, the vast black outside, above them, and the strong straight lines of rain shooting into the ground; but the house was firm and defiant without and they were warm within. Then they spoke quietly to each other, put into words their dreams, wound in whispers a tight bond around them that all the crashing splashing tumult could not break. Everything in the kitchen was in disarray so they just made some tea and sat on the couch sipping the hot liquid.

Evening became night and the night showered down a pattering torrent on the iron roof. They were too tired to move and, after a while, too tired even to talk, listening in the close warmth of the bare room still carelessly cluttered with their new furniture. She felt then that their love was indestructible, that this home which they had built was its tangible form that no contrary force, no malevolent god could rupture. He said 'Only men inhabit the earth and above us is the sky, otherwise there is nothing. Only this that we have, our love, can hold us against the depthless frustration of our being here.'
and this shocked her hearing her own thoughts echoed in rough words, because behind her were all the years of belief, but thrilled her too, filled her with the force of their shared strength. Then the rain stopped and the gutters gurgled close by the window. They went to bed.

The knife took shape on the table before her glinting yellow off the thin steel and the plates and dishes filled with cold food formed themselves in a pattern on the table. She felt him standing behind her looking over her shoulder, could almost feel the chair shuddering under the grip of his hands; so sure was she of his presence that she feared to turn around, and when she did she glimpsed David's open-necked shirt and the few thin strands of hair sticking out from under the V.

'You frightened me, standing there like that. You know I don't like you creeping up on me. Why do you walk so quietly?'

'You used to complain that I made too much noise. You're never satisfied.'

'Well I don't like it. I'm not young anymore, my nerves seem to be so much more sensitive now. Even a fly frightened me to-day.' She laughed at the thought of her shaking off the black insect.

'You thought that it was him, didn't you, behind you.'

'That is nonsense. You just gave me a fright.'

'Why deny it Mom, I've been watching you these last few weeks and I can see the way you turn back suddenly, every now and then, as if someone was walking behind. Do you miss him very much?'

'What do you know? You see what you want to see. He's gone and that's finished with. Come now, are we going to eat tonight or not? I'm not going to wait up any longer while you make up your minds; it's getting late and I'm tired. Call Elaine and let's eat.'

He went to the door and shouted down the passage then he came back to the table and sat down.

'Elaine is not well, she should go and see the doctor again. You do not pay enough attention to her, you are too careless with her.'

'Look Mom, she is pregnant, that's all. No good fussing about her. Just leave her and she'll be fine.'

'She is your wife isn't she. You leave her alone home at nights, you pay no attention to her when you are at home . . ..'

'Come now Mom, let us not start an argument.'

'I don't want to argue. I just say that you are not a proper husband.'

'Not as good as Father, eh!'

'Oh, what do you know.'

They sat transfixed in the hardness of their anger, staring at, but not seeing each other when Elaine shuffled into their coldness releasing them into a renewal of disinterested activity. They all ate in silence and out of the corner of her eye she saw her daughter-in-law's bent head, the lank-hanging hair like a shawl over her head, the olive skin soft and inhered with an oily glow, the sleep-heavy lids; and her stomach turned at the overt vulgarity of the girl's pregnancy. She was a coarse girl, lazy speaking, slow; always, ever since David brought her home to meet her, she disliked something of the girl, her being so different from her own self and too, she had that tendency to grow fat like him; when he could no longer close his trousers properly and the buttons burst their hold so

that he had to wear a belt and every year he extended the length one notch, then had to throw the thing away and buy another. Even when they bought two separate beds and they no longer slept together she felt disgust for his shapeless bulk near her, in the same room. Yet there was about her a warmth, an urgent stretching-out for love which she felt and even warmed to. They sometimes could sit on the bed next to each other talking together for hours and the girl laughed so easily so freely, flinging away unexpectedly a throaty rush of gaiety. She liked too the girl's closeness, self-centredness, the way that she would withdraw into herself all the hurt and pain that David inflicted upon her. She loved David, that was clear, and his coldness hurt her yet she drew the smart deep within her showing it to no one, carrying it about with her like the child.

And opposite her he sat tense, eating hurriedly and mechanically, hardly chewing the large bites of food that he pulled off the fork with his sharp even teeth and suddenly she felt rising from within her the thin painful desire to tempt him into argument, to draw him out, clash with him, if only for the last time. Because he was her son embodying her own ugly tightness she wanted to draw him out, to whip him, chastise him, to break her palsied dying spirit on his hardness.

'I expect that you will be going out again tonight,' she said, almost in a whisper.

'Which "meeting" is it tonight?'

But he did not answer her, did not even look at her.

'Don't you like this house any more, is that it? Do you prefer the companionship of your own friends rather than your wife's or your mother's? I am speaking to you David.'

So tight was her throat that she could barely speak, could hear and feel the strained rasp of her voice but he was not to be drawn out. He went on eating but Elaine had stopped and was watching her, watching David, waiting.

'What has happened to you, David? You seem to have lost the last remnants of your manners. I speak to you and you just continue eating. You have always been too spoilt, that's your trouble. You have always got things your own way and you have no gratitude, you have no gratitude.'

No, no that was not what she wanted to say. This all sounded so banal, she was still speaking to him as she did when he was a child; but the pain of her anger drove her on.

'What sort of friends are these that you talk about and go out with at nights to see but can never bring home with you, hey? What sort of people are they? Perhaps they do not even exist. You know, I think that is the real answer, that is what I do, I think that that is the real answer. They do not really exist, these so-called friends, they are just excuses so that you can get out of the house and leave your wife alone'.

'You can think what you like'.

He put down his knife and fork slowly and looked carefully at Elaine and then at her. None of them now ate, they sat in a fast triangle around the table and she could see that David would meet her, that he would come out soon and meet her.

'I do, I think what I like and I think that you go out at night to meet some girl, that is what I think; some cheap perfumed girl that you can paw and push all your lust on.'

Elaine stood up.

'No Mom. Don't say that, don't say that!'

'What do you want from me? Tell me, what do you want? I'm not going to fight with you, do you see, I am not going to fight.'

'Come David, say it, admit it. You go out at night with a girl . . .'

'Oh, don't!'

The girl sat down again, confused and frightened and the old woman was sorry that she was here; she was ashamed because she was going too far, but when David picked up his knife and fork again and started to eat, she knew that she could not stop there, that she must peck, peck at him until he admitted it and she had conquered him.

'It is clear on your face. You walk about here so nervously when you're at home that only a fool could fail to see that you don't care for any of us here and that your thoughts are elsewhere.'

'I don't understand what you want. You are only hurting Elaine and working yourself up for nothing. It's so pointless.'

'I want you to show yourself as you are . . . that you are no husband . . . nothing.'

'Alright, alright so I'm nothing, I'm spoilt, I'm all the things you say I am . . .'

'And you are having an affair with some girl . . . say that too.'

Like a small black ball of a bird, prickling with talons, she felt herself mounting him, clawing down into him but he was still impervious to her sharp accusations and the effort was tiring her. Throughout her thin feeble body she was shaking, murmuring nerves running their fine vibrations up and down, twisting round and round her stomach in ever-tightening coils. He stood up.

'I've had enough. I can't sit here listening to your evil talk any more, I'm going out.'

'Wait, stop a moment before you go. Listen, I'm not going to be here for very much longer . . .'

'What do you mean?'

'Just listen to me. Whatever you are doing, it is wrong. You are destroying the only thing that has really any meaning. You must think of what you are doing, you must think beyond. This girl, whoever she is, is nothing. Leave her, leave her and come back because if you don't there will be nothing left.'

'I don't understand you any more, you're becoming vague. I am going out now, I'll be back later.'

'David . . .'

The girl jumped up, and followed him out of the room leaving her alone. She could hear the voices from the front door but she was too exhausted to hear what they were saying. After a while, Elaine came back to the room, her eyes red and swollen.

'You are hateful, hateful.'

'I tried to tell him . . .'

'You will break up our marriage before you're finished. Is that what you want to do? If he is having an affair, it is our business. It has got nothing to do with you'.

The girl could speak no more. Overcome with tears, painful, full-flowing tears, she ran out of the room. The old woman sat staring at the table before her, at the half-finished food on the plates, and after a few blank moments left the room, shuffled slowly to the lounge. Not bothering to switch on the light, she found her chair in the dark and sat down. Her charging beating heart filled her ears with the whisper of blood, pressed against her eyes and forehead till she felt that the skin of her face would break under the pressure. So tired she was, so weary of

the press of life, the urgent constant agitation that was stronger than the frail ribbed membrane which encased and encumbered it. Old, old; the years unremembered that had passed in the silent struggle and only the brief moments, the clear fixed moments that remained to tell her that she had lived her life. The tension had gone; the house was now filled with a hushed awareness through which they walked and moved in their separate selves, never touching, never confronting each other. During the day she was alone, could hear the thudding energy of the workmen raising the little houses all around their own, the muffled shouts; and the steam-roller scratching on the dust road, chuffing heavily in the smell of tar; and when he returned at night, her voice, after the day-long loneliness was cold and brittle.

Their conversation was strained and in his flaccid, uncomfortable way he squirmed uneasily in her company until after supper, he mumbled some vague excuse about having to attend a club-meeting and waited expectantly for her tight smile and nod; then he relaxed, read the paper for a while so as not to reveal his haste. When the door had closed, she was alone again to think; it was certain that there was someone else and yet she could not force herself to penetrate that vague realisation, to imagine what the woman was like, to think of them together. Did he breathe in short gasps that warmed the curve of her neck? Could she feel his back tensing, caught in the rush and flow of his passion? Was she younger or older . . . pretty or ugly?

The room was warm. But outside the low wind-moan breathed heavily through the skeleton houses, catching in its murmur the bare branches to rustle and chide the window. Lying straight-out on the bed she watched their shadows rise and fall and soon learnt their rhythm; underneath her hands she felt the smooth heap of her stomach wherein the muscles pulled and urged with an eager nameless life that sometimes thrilled and sometimes frightened her but never let her be. Sleep evaded her and only for short moments did she feel herself lifted above and away from the bed as drowsiness covered her body; but only, only for short moments. For the rest of that long dark landscape night she lay aware of each small part of herself, aware that next to her was an unaccustomed emptiness that she dared not fill. So she kept still. She waited . . . heard the door open and close a hundred times . . . heard his breathing frame plod along the passage, come even close to the door;

but the door never opened, his figure never passed the rising falling shadows. Her mind made unwanted pictures of him lying with the woman whose face she could never see but whose each sensation echoed within her, and his slippery dominance pressed heavily down on her as in her mind it pressed on that faceless unknown body.

And even when the tears dribbled out of the corners of her eyes she did not move to wipe them away; and a hundred more times her sensitive ears heard clearly the car door and his footsteps thumping nearer the room. Then the wind let go the branch, ceased its sighing; the night lightened into day and she slept.

He came in while she was making breakfast but they did not speak; she heard him washing in the bathroom, shuffling about in his lazy distracted way and she was filled with shame. The house seemed to her to have become ugly, the walls dirty and grease-stained and the smell of food made her stomach twist with nausea. She wandered about in the heaviness of her pregnancy, her mouth bitter with the taste of the sleepless hours and when he stood watching her from the passage she sat down in confusion. He came up to the table, huge in his overcoat and stared down at her. She could hear the drip of the tap.

'I'll be home tonight.'

'Why?'

'I'm not going out again . . . not again.'

'Oh!'

'Please . . . listen. It had to come . . . that had to come. I tried to avoid it but you *know* that it was inevitable . . . you must have seen it.'

'Must have? I saw, of course, I saw, but not . . . so far. You never told me . . . anything of this. Who is she?'

'It makes no difference. Just some woman, some woman you don't know . . . I don't know. Just some woman.'

He sat down next to her, kept staring at her and she felt so cold so thin, yet bulbous, mishapen. She had nothing to say; they had arrived at the stage where words merely confused, merely covered the aching crack with a thick unyielding shell; they were now either to part or to continue to drift together and she did not feel like making the decision. It was for him, he had driven them to this so it was for him to decide; but no, no, that was not right. For it was inevitable. They had tried, tried to merge into each other, to conjoin their separate selves into a singleness but

without success; not because of him alone but because there were two of them, and because they did not try as hard as the ultimate goal demanded, they, together had failed.

But she was tired of the struggle. It had passed, was done with and perhaps she was even relieved; now it was for him to plan the next step. Whatever he said she would agree with as long as she did not have to decide.

'What next?'

'Next? We go on, of course. We have to give the baby a place.'

'And will you . . . will you go on with . . .'

'No, that is finished. There was nothing to it. Just a stamp . . . you know, a mark that it was all over.'

'Yes'.

He stood up and started for the door but then he turned to her, framed large in the doorway, 'We did not try hard enough,' and rested his head on the jamb.

'You know . . . you know I've thought so much about this, I've tried to see it clearly. You see we judged each other . . . all the time. We judged and found guilty and condemned . . . easy, do you understand? I can't say it any other way, that's how it seems to me . . . where we failed. And the triumphant thing about love is that there is no judgment, just acceptance.'

'But you have to judge, you have to. Anyway there's no point to this talk. We'll go on. But leave me now. I'm tired.'

'Yes, yes, I'm going.'

Then he walked away and she could hear the door closing gently.

Her finger dug into the hole in the arm of the chair, she could feel the soft matting that slowly, through the years had been worn away, worn away. She had fixed it herself a few times but her nervous hand always found the weak spot and begun again the gnawing. The sharp bristles of the fibre underneath the matting scratched on the tip of her finger but she could feel nothing else for her body was numb and drifting above the chair, above the floor, above the roof. Drifting, drifting in the senseless, soundless dark and only the tiny tip of her finger kept her anchored to the chair. But there was still the noise that echoed and clattered in the mind and for how much longer? For how much longer would she have to suffer the continuous churning; unrelenting? Let it yield to the dark,

be consumed by silence, soon soon. They must go on, must struggle with their own time, find out for themselves that to avoid slipping into the aimless drift the effort must be great, constant. For her it was over, the drifting finished; she had not realised till now, how long and wearisome they had been, those wasted, wasted years, for habit had channelled all exertion, had drawn off all living into useless narrow gutters.

Let them have the struggle; she could be of no help nor her path be any direction for them; only hindrance; only hindrance. To wait now for the cessation of the torment, of the noise when the floating stops and the churning grinds still. She was beyond them.

The Wall

by Sydney Cheatle

Two more boxes. Just two. Three by one six multiplied by eight and a teetering link with the undemented. Laid flat of course: on top of one another, precluding the pent up instability of haste and the clatter of tumbling night boxes in moonless cacophony. An unrehearsed choir of sleep turgid night nurses snapping at my wooden heels. Eight boxes in all. Lengthwise . . . like the piled and blackbeaming porter in carefully edited Treasuries of Institutional Knowledge–Covent Garden, cloth cap, eels in creels, no, crated carrots and a towering headgear of superimposed irregular sections in unavoidably eccentric veracity to margin top right overspilling into cowrie see coinage.

Just two more Tuesdays, two more boxes. Twelve feet of aided ascension and chinlevel coping at a stretch. Over the Wall. The Wall, the Wall. Masonry at random. Over the Wall and away. Free . . .

– At large is what you really meant to say isn't it?

– That's not true. I . . . I just want to be free.

– Hah. Like a bird I suppose? That's a scream.
– Oh go away.
– As you wish. But you'll call me back. I know.

I should not think about it. I should dismiss it. I should avoid prehensile preoccupation. I know. But it is useless to try and feign ignorance of what lies behind the Wall; transparent symbol of my glad incarceration, it bars the unrewarding path to myself. Myself; the quiddity, the substance, alive and hopeless. Without compassion. Blundering evil with an open fly and the hunted shoelace of the wretch. There is nothing I can do about it. It is as compulsive and inevitable as urination.

I am a desensitised wraith bowed with a rheumed contraction of toad-lust. Down, down. Think about fine things, good things, meaningless things. Think about a chequered army of unmotivated wardrobes asquat on a white hyperbolic beach curving to blunted obscurity beneath truncated promontories of funicular joy. A hot mobile sky of clanking aluminium seagulls suspended in commercial dunwash. Succumb to the reconditioned reflex and conjure posterhazed memories of happy days. Childhood days. Through the wise crimson-tinted spectacles of adult insanity. Seaside days . . .

. . . solar infested schizothymia for a holiday that is really different deviational trippers earnestly requested not to litter the beach with anxieties spiritually expose themselves or leave empty neuroses lying half buried in the sand remember there may be children about . . .

– About what?

His face is flushed and eager at my shoulder. I jerk back to reality and explain haltingly:

– Well . . . all I meant was about. I mean . . . well . . . just about.
– About what? Tell me, tell me Go on. Tell me.

I shrug resignedly:

– About twelve or thirteen I suppose.

He nods in conspiratorial understanding:

– Hah. Twelve or thirteen. Nubile erectile tactile. I know.
– Alright, I smile tolerantly. Let's just leave that for the moment. Please?
– Yes, he agrees. We'll leave it to one side.
– Dismiss it altogether, I say with finality.
– Postpone it for the moment anyway, he compromises.

There is a silence punctuated by his heavy breathing. He is adrift in a tempest of imagery. I tap him urgently on the shoulder:
– Let's open up an entirely new field of speculation.
– O.K. I'm on. That's a good idea. A good idea. You begin.
– You're sure you're ready?
– Yes, he says with assurance.
– Right then . . . em . . . Well . . . let's see now . . .
– Well go on, go on. Stop dawdling. One, two, three . . .
– They just don't know. They don't know what it's like to be an inmate, If only.
He interrupts sarcastically:
– You call that original?
– Well I . . .
– That is really old.
– But . . .
– Old and tired, he repeats. And what is more you've said it before. Every day you say it. You've never stopped saying it since you came here.
– I can't help it. It's . . . it's the atmosphere.
He appeals to the vaulted ceiling:
– Good God will you listen to him. The atmosphere indeed. Hah. That's a laugh anyway.
He places his hands behind his back and executes a neat pirouette thrusting his chin within a few inches of mine.
– That's a laugh. Aren't you ever satisfied? Why the hell are you always finding fault? Don't you like it here? Don't you like us?
– Of course I do, I assure him hurriedly. It's not that . . . it's just . . . I don't know . . . it's just . . .
– I understand, I understand. I know what it's like. I spoke hastily. Let's start again. Not now though. In five minutes' time. Five minutes. On the dot. I'll be back.

You'll be back. You'll be back alright. Ready to launch another inoffensive. Nothing I can put my finger on. Just barbs, numb and indecisive that make me want to scratch through the top of my head until the fingers are embedded in my brain. I have become resigned to you now. I don't even know if you really exist. I think you do but it's only a feeling. Nothing positive. Instinctive. Your personality is too distinctive

for a figment. For me you exist. Maybe not for others. But then there is only me. A stooped shade in the asylum workshop.

★ ★ ★

Once a church, it is long and cylindrical with oppressive oak beams that spring effortlessly across a span of three wardrobes and embed themselves thoroughly in the granite walls. Light is admitted erratically through a tidy row of newly incised clerestory windows, aided by a feeble contribution from the stained glass gap in the gable-end creeper.

This is the rehabilitation workshop. The creative outlet. Bumbled baskets, dissembled wardrobes and a variety of other unsaleable commodities that could only have been made by madmen. At least three objects are turned out each week, varying in shape and material, some bearing faint but unmistakable similarities to recognisable objects, all without exception stamped with the proud trademark of retarded dementia.

– We done it ourselves . . .

. . . even if the handle hangs from the bottom instead of the top . . .

– A fine piece of Early Dissociate wardrobe . . .

. . . even if you have to climb into its creaking maw to get to the mirror.

I confess that, for a time, I too experienced the perspiring pride and righteousness of the sublimating artisan. Each piece of prefabricated (fixed throughout with non-toxic glue) wardrobe was received by Dr. Devine with genuine acclaim, even adulation. After purposely attaching the clothes hooks to the floor and receiving the same grave commendation, it occurred to me that perhaps I was being deceived. I reserved my judgement however and continued to work if lacking somewhat in my former dedication and not without some doubts as to the eventual destination of these misshapen pieces of furniture. These doubts were the first visible manifestations of the growing disbelief in the integrity of the Institution that has precipitated my plan to cross the Wall.

In all fairness it must be admitted that the Institution could not have housed another wardrobe. They stand everywhere; in the refectory, recreation rooms, doctors' rooms . . . a mound of them is piled high in the kitchen garden . . . one cannot walk more than a few feet in any part of the building without encountering one of these monstrous appliances.

Through wind-blown curtains nurses may be perceived disrobing before wardrobes, brushing their dandruff into wardrobes, presumably sleeping on and arising fresh at six in the morning from wardrobes. Doctors miraculously appear and disappear into them, they do solemn duty as impromptu seats, podiums, containers for miscellaneous rubbish . . . some even whisper that several have been laid to rest in the Institution graveyard with due ceremony.

The wardrobes that we labour on are (or so I thought before my discovery) purchased by the emporiums outside and retailed to the unwitting public at a fair and anonymous price. We are a self-sufficient community, boast the authorities, and not in any way dependent on the unpredictable charity of Church or State. We are, in fact, bestowing upon Society a useful public service. Most of all, they tell us, we are in communication with the World Outside through the doubtful medium of bedside furniture. We communicate with Rich and Poor, Weak and Strong alike. Bishops take off their rings in front of our wardrobes, famous actresses take off their clothes before them: in their squeaky and inconsistent interiors, surprised lovers hide and equally surprised Peeping Toms peep. To our fevered minds the World Outside has gradually assumed the grotesque dimensions of an enormous veneered wardrobe whose uneven twin doors flap incessantly in unspeakable gratitude.

My appalling discovery and consequent disillusion was sudden, and as is so often the case, precipitated by a momentary lapse from normality. Goaded by the acquisition of an unlawful pencil, I spent one nerve-racking afternoon in the workshop engaged on a surreptitious drawing of a young and naked girl. As it would have been out of the question for me to request a supply of drawing paper for such a pursuit, I drew her on the nearest plane surface to hand, which happened to be Number Seventeen (17). No. Seventeen (17), I must explain, is a piece of plywood two feet long by twelve inches wide that is transformed quite brilliantly into a wardrobe shelf for empty bottles of shaving lotion and old collars. My choice of No. Seventeen was dictated by the fact that, once in position, the drawing surface would be invisible to all but those unfortunate people whose height at no time exceeds seven inches.

The actual execution of the sketch aroused in me feelings both fearsome and tumescent. I tasted, almost to the full, the hybrid fruits of

uninhibited creative endeavour, losing track of time or place in my all-consuming passion to see the thing completed. At last, laying the pencil aside, I stood back and surveyed it with a reasonable attempt at objectivity. I felt only disgust and a deep sense of inadequacy. The drawing was stiff, crude . . . blatantly obscene. The posture was quite ridiculous and in absolute defiance of any known anatomical precept. In fact, the figure (which I had carefully enshrined beneath erotic drapery) looked for all the world like a bulbous and bowlegged pygmy over whose angular profile a large impossible egg hung in miraculous suspension. Bodily orifices and extrusions were exaggerated to the point of comic deformity. It was really weak and not worthy of the meanest urinal. In renunciatory haste I restored it to a semblance of decency by the addition of some underwear and stuffed Number Seventeen in its place with the help of Sturdy's Instant and Non-Toxic Glue.

The following Tuesday at exactly eleven a.m. the workshop doors were unlocked as usual to facilitate the entry with customary and disproportionate ritual, of three or four packing cases containing embryonic prefabricated wardrobes, bundles of coloured cane, straw, and fresh supplies of Sturdy's Glue. I received my neatly packaged bundle of parts labelled One to Twenty-Two and set to work without even opening the Instruction booklet thoughtfully included in each consignment by the amnesia-ridden authorities. Whilst fitting Numbers Fifteen and Sixteen into place, I experienced a twinge of remorse at my lapse of the previous week and resolved that this time Number Seventeen (17) should be transformed into a shelf without delay. Grasping the inoffensive piece of pale plywood my attention was distracted by a crude representation of a bulbous and bowlegged pygmy with attendant egg and effaced underwear being attacked violently by an even more bulbous and bowlegged giant dressed only in top hat and cowboy boots, from whose gaping maw a string of short expletives tumbled into an imperfectly enclosed bubble. The prevailing air of ferocity in the composition left me in no doubt whatsoever as to its authorship. This was the work of a madman. A real madman. A specific madman, This was Dolan's work.

Dolan, during his short stay in the main building, had systematically embellished every plane surface in sight with a prolific array of top-hatted and booted pornography. When forcibly deprived of his pencil,

he used a spoon. When the spoon was removed, he used his fingernails. Dolan's daily drawing was discussed as eagerly as the most discerning of daily newspapers. His erratically garbed giants, with a typically careless disregard for age or station, pursued nuns, nurses, schoolgirls and even crippled old ladies, across tables and chairs, up and down walls, across plastered ceilings, sometimes even around and around toilet seats in concentric futility. Newly discovered genuine Dolans were submitted to the same painstaking scrutiny as the most apocryphal of old masterpieces. His name became a legend. Almost overnight he became undisputed Master of the Inmates.

It was inevitable that he should have had many imitators, but none could depict stark terror on the face of a nun in full flight with the devilish accuracy of a Dolan, while other giants looked pale and emasculate when compared to his raging monsters. Then they cut Dolan's nails. His output gradually awindled to a mere weekly daub on the refectory wall in raspberry jam, then dried up altogether. Soon afterwards Dolan became violent and had to be transferred to the Annexe.

Without doubt the giant on my Number Seventeen was a genuine Dolan. But Dolan was and is, considerably more than seven inches in height? It dawned upon me that there was another workshop in the Annexe. Another body of inmates motivated by falsehoods and catchphrases to lovingly dismember our wardrobes and baskets, pack them in boxes and return them with new instruction booklets and fresh glue. This is who we have been in communication with. The crazy people in the Annexe. To and fro, from one workshop to the other, Tuesdays and Saturdays, boxes arrive, wardrobes depart in regular repetition. Occupational therapy. Delude the poor fools into thinking they are doing something useful. It keeps their half minds off other things.

On that day I decided to bridge the Wall. With the empty packing cases. Six weeks ago now. Six boxes. Two more Tuesdays. Eight in all. Eight by one six gives twelve. Lengthwise. Over the Wall.

* * *

– Here I am again like I said. On the dot, five minutes,
– So it is. Five minutes.
He folds his arms expectantly:
– Well? Is that all you've to say? Aren't you glad to see me?

– Of course, of course, I reassure him. Of course I'm glad to see you.
– Well let's begin all over again shall we?
– Em . . . yes. Eh . . . what exactly do I say?
– You know as well as I do, he says impatiently, you know, the usual . . . they don't understand us and all that . . .
– Of course. Right. Are you ready?
– I 'm ready, I'm ready, stop dawdling . . . one, two, three . . .
– They just don't know. They don't know what it's like to be an inmate. If only . . .
– That's what I say, that's what I say. I said that. I said what you've just said. I said that they just don't know.
He hops from one foot to the other in excitement. Encouraged, I continue:
– They don't understand us. Maybe . . . maybe we are outside the limits of human understanding. If only . . .
– Like sprinkler stop valves?
– Well I hadn't really thought much about . . .
– Like sprinkler stop valves? he repeats eagerly. Because I know what you mean, I know what you mean. Omigod I'm really with you on this one. You know every time I pass a sprinkler stop valve sign I stop in my tracks . . . I stop dead. I stop and I say there it is. There it is and we don't even know what it's all about. Not a clue, Not a notion. But we accept it. We accept it implicitly. Deny it if you can, go on, deny it if you can. Do we even hazard a guess at its real significance? No. And that's why I say here and now–Throw off all your clothes before it's too late. Throw off all your clothes and all will be well. Right as rain. Plain as a pikestaff, see for yourself. It's a pattern. Simple as that. Omigod I know, I tell you. I know what it's like. I'm human too you know.
His excitement has subsided and he gazes moodily at the floor. I clear my throat and venture another well tried platitude:
– It's not as if they're inhuman. Or even . . .
– Humane, humane, I'll grant you that. Yes, I'll concede that.
– Or even disinterested . . .
– I'll go along with that, he agrees. Yes I'm with you there.
– It's just that they don't understand, I say triumphantly.
– You've said it. That's the whole point. That's the very essence of the problem. The very essence.

I decide to carry the conversation a stage further than usual:
– None of them understands.
He glances quickly at me and says in a surprised voice:
– Well I don't know about that. I wouldn't say that no . . .
– Not even Devine, I add decisively.
– Excuse me, he says brusquely, I've got to catch a train.
– B-but wait a minute, I haven't finished . . .
– Sorry. Can't wait. Must go. Train to catch. Goodbye. He turns as if to leave. I grab at his sleeve.
– Look. All I'm getting at is that . . .
– I don't want to hear about it, I don't want to hear!
He shakes me off roughly and walks away.
– Wait . . . please
He snarls over his shoulder:
– Go away. Leave me alone. Get away from me. Unspeakable bastard. SHOOO . . .
He waves his hands in the air. I am alone.

You know best. Of course you know best. You always do. But Devine has ceased to be of any assistance. A medium-sized man Devine. Doctor Devine. In mind and body. Cherubic with neat spectacles lending a mild air of mechano-surgery to his flaccid and embraceable physiognomy. A family man, Devine, lost in a wilderness of alien syndromes. I have lost confidence in him without his noticing any appreciable change in our relationship. If anything he thinks that my mental state has taken a distinct turn for the better. He assures me that my emotional vacuity is the essence of normality and in doing so has wandered complacently outside my daily experience. A kind man, honest and truthful, whose rigid impartiality masks a daily increasing indifference–occupational if you like, to concerns that lie outside the hearth. He needs a good strong dose of chronic involvement. Perhaps if it had been one of his daughters? . . .
His daughters . . .
The youngest one . . .
About eleven . . .
With nascent . . .
Stop. You can't afford to think about it. It is readily dismissed anyway. The mere thought is clinical. No. Doctor Devine is not among us. He is

not a part of our life. He comes at nine and leaves at six. Sometimes even half-past five. His stature is commensurate to that of the postman or the visiting dentist. I have lost faith in Devine.

At first it was different. Confused. So confused. In the haze of disbelief that follows on the climacteric . . . It wasn't me . . . it never happened . . . it was all a dream . . . Or even if it did happen I have since discarded the motive integument. I thought Devine's features were embraceable then. He didn't seem to hate me. I can't seem to remember. I would have preferred if Devine had hated me. Actively. To him I am only a number. A case history.

Yes, everything has changed. I have the Plan. I no longer believe in Devine. I no longer believe that I should stay in the Institution. I have not changed. I am still the same. I shall never change. The Institution cannot change me. It keeps me out of trouble. Out of danger. I would much prefer to go away. Away from this country. Away to a desolate place where I menace only the wild animals. They will never let me go away from here. Not even if I was cured.

Cured, cured. What is cured? How does one cure a fixation, even an idea? Plant an electrode? Or take a pill? Apply a poultice? Jump off a high chair? Cured. It reminds me of a toothache. Now run down like a good boy to the chemist on the corner. Mr. Frick M. P. S. I., you can't miss it. It does NOT mean monkey's piss sold inside. Take this little slip of paper down to Mr. Frick and he'll give you a bottle. Go on, take the slip of paper. No. You don't need money. Get it on the Bill. Anyway . . .
Daddy has ringworm . . .
Daddy has a boil . . .
Daddy has no small change . . .
So get it on the Bill. The Account. Just say when you go in–
On the slate Mr. Frick. On the slate. Remember that. Now off with you and if you're back soon Mammy will give you a . . . . give you a . . . a harmonium.
– Penny was what you really wanted to say wasn't it?
– Oh I don't know . . .
– You really wanted to say Penny didn't you. Go on. I know. He places a paternal arm on my shoulder. I shake him off roughly:
– Leave me alone. I'm confused. I think I'm going crazy.
He surveys me quizzically with hands on hips.

– Hah. That's a good one anyway. That's a laugh. Crazy . . . eh?
– I mean really crazy. You know . . . really . . .
– You mean . . . he glances secretively over his shoulder, you mean . . . mad?
– Yes.
– Like the people in the Annexe?
– Yes, I reply shortly.
– You mean . . . he continues . . . like . . . well . . . dribbling at the . . .?
– Foaming, slobbering, raving, call it what you will.
– I know, he raises an admonitory finger. There's no need to tell me. I know.
He gazes musingly at the ceiling for a moment and looks at me sharply:
– I suppose you know, he says in a whisper, that Hennessy and Dolan are in the Annexe?
– I know.
– Well? Is that all you have to say? You sound as if you're glad.
– Well I . . .
– Didn't you like Dolan? he says accusingly.
– Well yes. I suppose so . . . but he scared me stiff.
– Oh he did now did he?
– Well yes . . . everybody was afraid of Dolan. At least as far as I know, I add weakly.
– Oh they were now were they?
– Well I . . . as far as I know . . .
– As far as you know eh? Hah. And let me tell you that isn't very far. That's no great bloody distance. It's no farther than from here to . . . from here to . . . he repeats in confusion, Well anyway I wasn't afraid of Dolan, he concludes triumphantly.
– No?
– No I wasn't. Not a bit. Do you know something?
– What?
– Do you know, he repeats, not only was I not afraid of him but I loved him. Yes I loved Dolan.
He shakes his head sadly. I reply with what I trust is prudent sarcasm.
– You loved Dolan?
– Madly. Hopelessly. Distractedly. To me he was God.
He is silent for a moment. I tear off a painfully large piece of fingernail and

flick it on the floor. He recollects with a start and returns to the attack:
– And do you know something else? he says truculently.
– What?
– Do you know that I think you are a dirty scheming little upstart . . . yes, upstart . . . to talk about people like Dolan behind their backs. People who are in the Annexe . . . people who are sick, who can't defend themselves . . . sick . . . like . . .
He waves his arms in confusion and then lets them fall limply by his side.
– Do you know what you are? he says quietly.
– No. What?
– Do you know what you are? he repeats shrilly, do you know what you are? Do you know what you remind me of?
– N-n . . .
– You're just a . . . a . . .
– Well? I say impatiently.
– You're just an old Mumpkin, he says explosively.
– I am, am I?
– Yes. Do you even know what it means? Good God don't tell me you don't even know what it means. I thought you used to be a schoolmaster. Hah. I wouldn't send my children to your school and that's one thing certain. Hah. Not in a fit. Quite apart from that other thing. Quite apart from the other business. Found strangled eh?
– Please go away.
– Oh I'll go away, he says expansively, I'll go away alright. Don't you worry about that. Only too glad I assure you. But first I'll tell you what a mumpkin is. First I'll tell you what you are . . .
– Well. What is it? What am I?
– Oh I don't really care to tell you, he says evasively.
– Well go on. Tell me.
He scratches his chin and reflects.
– Dolan was the only person who really understood me. The only person in the whole wide world.
I cannot conceal my impatience.
– Well come on. Tell me what a mumpkin is. Tell me.
– The only one, he repeats. And now he's gone. Gone.
A large and patently artificial tear rolls down his cheek, to disappear into his tie. He says briskly:

– Alright. I'll tell you what you are. I'll tell you what a mumpkin is. You've asked for it this time. Well a mumpkin is . . . is . . . well it's . . . well I'm not quite sure really . . .
– What the hell do you mean you're not quite sure?
– Well a man once told me . . . he hesitates.
– Well go on, go on.
He looks fixedly at a point two inches over my head.
– A man once told me that it was a pubic wig. Yes that's what it is. A pubic wig. That's what you are. That's why we must all undress HERE AND NOW if the world is to go on any longer. Here and now. Simultaneously. On the spot. All over the world. No clothes. Only naked flesh. Hah. I know it all. I know. I know what you are. You're a dirty old mumpkin. Keep away from me. I wouldn't soil my mind talking to you.
He bounds away from me and holds open the door with one hand.
– Dirty old mumpkin, dirty old mumpkin, dirty old . . . wait . . .
He claps a hand to his mouth in dismay,
– Good God I've just remembered . . .
– What's the matter? I enquire gently.
– I almost forgot, he replies. I almost forgot. I have an appointment with the Pope.
– Who?
– I've an appointment with the Pope at seven, he continues. With HIS HOLINESS Himself. Do you know something? he adds secretively.
– What?
– I'll tell him a thing or two. A thing or two.
He slips out the door and says over his shoulder:
– I'll tell him alright. A thing or two. Make no mistake.

* * *

The Institutional day is repetitive, uneventful and, to me at least, tolerable. I have never really known any other kind of existence. My life to date has been but a series of lengthy incarcerations in similar surroundings–boarding school, university halls of residence, academic lodging houses; a succession of colleges and foundations, invariably large, draughty and executed in redbrick of the most depressing quality. Indeed I doubt very much if I ever could have ventured into manhood at all without the solid and reassuring bulk of an Institution at my back.

It would be nice to imagine this as a subconscious yearning for parents that I never knew, but unfortunately I knew both my parents quite well. Too well perhaps. They were quite ordinary parents of the standard size, sex and shape. We lived in an ordinary house with one bathroom upstairs and a lean-to conservatory. Almost everybody had a room to themselves except at Christmas.

My parents had the conventional number of children of whom I was the penultimate fourth. The most that I can remember of my brothers and sisters is, that after playing with me strenuously as a child, they left one by one in desultory fashion to get married, reappearing every Christmas thereafter in an inordinate wave of bedroom slippers, synthetic leather toilet cases and multitudinous bath salts of the finest verbena.

My childhood was uneventful, distinguished only by a third prize in the egg and spoon race at the age of nine. Strangely enough, the only experience which could be even vaguely regarded as traumatic, occurred on exactly the same day, which, it seems superfluous to add, was the day of the annual School Sports. Encouraged, even elated by my success earlier in the afternoon, I entered my name on the list of starters in the Sack Race which immediately preceded, one might even say anticipated the lengthy and repetitive Speeches of Prizegiving etc.

The Sack Race was performed under the noses of a thousand parents and a million sisters, it had the bemused blessing of the Papal Nuncio himself, it was at once the comedy showpiece and Grand Finale.

To be brief, I lost my trousers in the Sack Race. Irretrievably, in the depths of an old potato sack. As soon as the fact had been ascertained, I instinctively followed the same chill course as any quick-witted adult might have been expected to pursue in similar circumstances. I fell, heavily and with native cunning. I fell before the grandstand, before the shocked gaze of the Papal Nuncio himself. I lay still, a tiny figure enveloped in rough hessian, and refused to move. In vain a thousand hands laboured to remove the supposedly stupefying sack, in vain they offered me treasures of ice cream, money and book prizes if I would only get up and let the speeches continue. Clergy, parents and sisters alike promised not to look. All this I disdained. I refused to get up. Categorically. If the Papal Nuncio had offered me eternal salvation I would still have refused. Even now I tremble at my temerity and thank

Heaven that I have had the minimum of wordly success, for such defiance could have only led to an early grave.

I lay on the ground for many hours, unsuccessfully ignored. The speeches were performed, lacking however in their customary vigour. The prizes were presented, including my own which was hurriedly claimed in unspoken absentia by my form master, and the Papal Nuncio closed the proceedings with a speech that came far below expectations. I had become quite resigned to spending my early adolescence in the sack when, without warning and from a great height, rain began to fall sporadically. At a given signal, a thousand parents descended upon me and I was borne aloft, complete with sack, into the steaming safety of the Marquee. Here I was summarily divested of my sack and inserted once more into conventional legwear. Everyone, from the Nuncio down to the most shapeless sister, agreed that it had been the best Sports Day for years.

Looking back, the only remarkable thing that I can recall about my parents is that, in absolute defiance of suburban dogma, they had no desire whatsoever to advance in the world or elevate the status of their offspring; a makeshift philosophy which was cheerfully expounded to all and sundry on the slightest provocation – Sure what's the use of wanting to get on, my father would say, when it's so much bloody fuss and bother?

I do not think about my family very much now. Indeed I am unable to recall the past with any degree of definition. If confronted with reasonable proof I would be quite prepared to believe that I never had a family or a past. There have been other things to think about. Many other things. Mostly I think about the Plan.

Night would be intolerable without the Plan. Aeons of whispering silence punctuated by careful footsteps that fade interminably into the darkness. Starched motion with medieval lanterns and flagged corridors, white sheets, crisp and surgical, bare walls and barred windows in wired glass. This is night. I lie awake and motionless on the great porcelain bed of pulsating unease. Now and then a scream or fit of laughter tears me from the stupor of unholy joy and staring terror that is the Plan cogitative. Sometimes through the thin walls I listen in agonies of shame and disgust to my neighbour's erratic but incessant ritual of self abuse. Although his anomaly is harmless and trivial, resulting at most in the defilation of a pair of ex-army surplus sheets, I cannot condone or

become reconciled to the act itself which for me has always been synonymous with failure and degradation. I am enclosed, smothered. I sub due with increasing difficulty the urge to scream obscenities at the top of my voice, beat my head against the wall and tear at the stout wooden door until the fingers are numb and bleeding. I am alone with my thoughts.
– You're thinking about it now aren't you. Go on. I know.
– Oh leave me alone.
He sits quietly on the bed and whispers:
– Penny penny of the long dark hair who was found strangled.
– Have you no pity?
– In a field, he continues. In a field. Under a bush. Without a stitch. Indeed.
– Leave me please.
– Of course I'll leave, he says with mock assurance. Instantly. Right away. In two shakes. I know when I'm not wanted. Oh yes. I know. Indeed. But then maybe you don't really want me to leave. Hm? Maybe you want me to stay. Hm?
He thrusts his face close to mine and repeats:
– Hm? You wouldn't like it if I were to go away for good now, would you? Answer me that. Come on. Answer me that. Truthfully now. Cross your heart and hope to die. Boy Scout's honour and look me straight in the eye.
– I don't know, I answer wearily. Sometimes I wish you would go away.
He rises abruptly.
– Very well. I'll go and leave you alone. All alone. With the mad people. I suppose you'll be put in the Annexe any day now. Goodbye.
– Wait . . . stay. I didn't mean it. Stay for a while.
He shrugs carelessly.
– Of course you know that I'm a very busy man.
– Yes, yes, I know, I assure him . . . It's good of you to bother about me.
– There are plenty of other things I could be doing, he says petulantly.
– I appreciate that. Stay awhile. Don't leave me by myself.
– For instance, he spreads out his palms in deprecation, I could be out in a boat fishing.
– Yes yes I know.
He sits down on the bed again.

– Well I'll stay then, he says without enthusiasm. Why do you want me to stay? he adds sharply.
– I want you to help me. Please. I need help.
– I think I'd much prefer to be out in a boat.
– Please, I say urgently. It's a matter of life and death.
– The fishing is good in the Markets I hear.
– Please listen to me. I . . . I'll tell you the Plan.
– Tell me the Plan then, he says complacently.
– I . . . I'm going to cross the Wall.
– So?
– Well I'm afraid.
– Of what?
– Oh nothing. Th . . . then I'll get a boat to England.
– What are you afraid of?
– Maybe I can get a job in a factory.
– What are you afraid of? he repeats quietly.
– I'll change my name. Nobody will ever know.
– Come on tell me. What are you afraid of?
– Get married and maybe settle down.
– You needn't bother telling me anyway, he whispers.
– Raise children . . . what . . . what do you mean?
He rises from the bed and draws himself up to his full height. He looks at his nails for a moment and then points a finger at me suddenly.
– I know what you're afraid of.
– D . . .do you?
– Yes, he says shortly . . . I know.
– It's alright, I don't want you to stay. You can go fishing.
– I'm staying, I'm staying, I'm staying, I'm staying right here.
– You know then?
He smiles understandingly.
– Of course. What were you thinking of when I came in?
– Oh I don't know, lots of things . . . onions for instance.
– Hah. Onions my foot. I'm no fool. There's no flies on me. I know. I've no flies.
– Well I . . .
He jabs me sharply with his finger.
– You, he says slowly–you were thinking of what it would be like on

the other side of the Wall. Free as a bird. You were thinking of the dark evenings. Dark at five o'clock you said . . .
I interrupt heatedly.
– I didn't, I didn't, only for a moment and then . . .
He waves me to silence and continues.
– Dark at five o'clock, you said, and maybe I'll walk up to the school, just for the walk, you said just for the walk. I'd better keep my face well hidden, you said, just in case anybody might recognise me. Maybe I'll hide behind a tree, the same tree will do, you said, and wait until the girls get off from hockey, you said. Am I right?
I bury my face in my hands.
– I don't know. I feel sick. I wish I was dead.
– And then, you said, maybe there'll be one or two girls, maybe even a girl on her own, young, you said, about twelve or thirteen like Devine's daughter and maybe then you . . .
– Stop in God's name. Please. I'm going mad.
He bends down suddenly and says quickly:
– Look. Do you trust me. Truthfully now. Yes or no?
– Yes. I suppose I do.
– If I tell you something you'll believe me.
– Yes, I say without hesitation.
He straightens up a little.
– Well you remember when you said that you're going mad.
– Yes.
– Do you know something?
– What?
– You are mad, he answers shortly.
– Mad?
– Yes. Mad. Crazy, Round the bend. Insane, stark raving.
– Well . . . What can I do? I say helplessly.
He looks at the ceiling for a moment and shakes his head sadly.
– Nothing. Absolutely nothing.
– Is there no cure? I enquire slowly.
– Hah, he laughs harshly. Cure. That's a laugh anyway. That's a laugh. Listen, he beckons me closer. Listen did you ever hear of a madman being cured? Truthfully now?
– Well I . . .

– You see, he says delightedly, you never did, did you? Go on. Quote me one instance of a madman being cured.
– Well I . . . I pause in confusion . . . well the asylums and . . .
– Answer me this. You're in an asylum aren't you?
– Well yes but . . .
– Are you cured? There's a poser. Are you cured?
– I suppose not.
– And a good thing too.
– But . . .
– A damn good thing, he adds shaking his head.
– But . . .
– You see the finest people in the world are mad.
– Are they?
– Yes, he reiterates. The finest. The salt of the earth. The top men.
I interrupt respectfully.
– I always thought that it was the other . . .
– Jesus Christ, Napoleon, Michelangelo, Shakespeare, Pinocchio.
– They were all . . .? I enquire politely.
– Mad as hatters, he says proudly. Every one. To the last man. Entirely.
– But are you sure? I never heard . . .
He waves me aside.
– Of course I'm sure. Told me so themselves. Hannigan, they said, we're mad. Mad as hatters. Why not join them? Eh?
– Well . . . I hesitate.
– Glad to have you. Honoured I'm sure. Make no mistake.
– What's going to happen when I cross the Wall?
– We'll see, he says reassuringly. Don't you worry. Everything will be just fine. Everything will be just as you planned.
– I didn't plan anything, I interrupt hastily. Not really . . . I just thought . . .
– Of course, he agrees. Of course. I understand. Don't worry.
– You mean that everything . . .?
– Everything will be exactly as you had hoped.
– But isn't it wrong? I mean . . . shouldn't I resist?
– Wrong? he says in amazement. Wrong? he repeats. Resist? Don't you want to go to the school and . . .?
– Yes yes I suppose I do, I say hurriedly. But that's because I'm sick.

– Sick? he says wonderingly. Hm . . . so that's the way it is. He walks over to the window and stares into the blackness; without turning his head he enquires.
– Answer me this. In all the books about Shakespeare was there ever a mention, a mention mark you, of his ever being sick?
– Well no but . . .
He turns on his heel and faces me.
– Jesus Christ?
– No I suppose . . .
– Pinocchio?
I remain silent and stare blankly at the white wall. The moonlight invests the room with a soft white ethereal glare. He looks old and lined. I appeal to his age and wisdom.
– You're sure everything is all right?
– Certain, he asserts. Convinced of it. Stake my life . . .
– Well then . . .
– Everything will go off like a dream. A dream. Five o'clock, after the hockey. Not a soul in sight. Pitch dark. Nice young girl with dark hair, long legs and small . . .
– Alright, I silence him harshly. Alright. That's enough. I've made up my mind.
– You'll join us then. Only two boxes to go. Clever chap.
– Yes, I say resignedly. I'll join you.
He nods his head in silent approval and sits down once more on the bed. He appears nervous and ill at ease. Several times he looks up as if to say something but seems to find difficulty in phrasing his intention correctly. He bites his nails for a moment and says:
– Look. I hope that you won't think that I'm officious but the fact is we do have one or two stipulations . . . you know, he says carelessly, select company and all that . . . don't want to let in the riffraff . . . waive it in your case if I could . . . higher authority . . . you know how things are. Regulations and all that, he concludes.
– Well what is it? I say frankly.
– Well, he coughs elaborately. Well to be brief you must promise not to resist. Never resist. You must never resist.
– Well . . . I hesitate . . . I . . . it's a difficult decision to . . .
– Over the Wall, he prompts. Over the Wall. Free as a bird. The school.

Not a soul in sight. Nice girl. Not a stitch. All naked . . .
– What was that? I look up sharply.
– Slip of the tongue, he explains with forced equanimity. Slip of the tongue. Not a soul in sight. Free as a bird.
– I give in.
– Hah, he says in delight. I knew you would. I knew we had the right material this time. Listen. Got to go now. Catch a train. Busy man. Glad to have you. Honoured. We can be friends now. Eh? He taps me on the shoulder and repeats:
– Now we can be friends. Eh? Really friends.
– Yes. My voice is tired and hollow. Now we can be really friends. Take my hand. I am cold.

Take my hand. I am cold. Take my hand and descend with me to a groined underworld of lucid fire that sears the turgid image of my being to a solitary ash of tempered lust, follow me through icy cylinders of dread, blind in the predatory glare of a thousand eyes converging, wrapped cold in a yielding blanket of humped red rats . . .

I am alone; a tall shadow splintered in the rancid blaze of undulating fear. Alone.

Figures of Eight

by Angus Stewart

This morning they're sweeping the Tuileries. The sky is open like half a fresh egg-shell, but our heads are well below the slime. At least I think so. I cannot be sure.

'It's disgusting.' she says. 'Those stick-insect Congo children. Press pictures haven't been so revolting since Belsen.'

I agree. Jan turns back to the air-mail *Telegraph*. Really that's where she belongs. Tomorrow she'll open a fresh one, and this edition will be

swallowed by some French cistern. No, not tomorrow; this is Paris, though I'd all but forgotten.

I open my eyes with a wide aperture, and a slow shutter, as a painter should. They've ranged the wrought-iron chairs about the pond for the nannies who watch the boys sailing boats, and guard spare ones. The chair-backs are cast into figures of eight. I drag my eyes away because I hate perpetuity.

'One tea-bag doesn't go far,' Jan says. She prods it tentatively with a spoon as if she were making a tricky shot on her croquet lawn. I inhale Disque Bleu, and the discs slip down my trachea like bangles on the arms of a gypsy dancer. Jan could *blow* smoke-rings once. Everyone would sit still in the vicarage, not breathing. The flawless rings didn't irk me then. I resolve to be brave, and let my eyes travel smoothly around the figure of eight on the nearest chair. It's no good. My nerve is beginning to falter.

Jan squares her back more uncompromisingly on the woman two tables away. The tin legs of her chair quiver in the gravel and threaten to collapse. Aside the 'Court and Social' she whispers:

'Peter, I'm *sure* she's a prostitute.'

I agree. I close my eyes for relief. From the ot of them. From me. The tart is muttering to herself again with an implication more terrible even than the wrought-iron chair-backs. I open the throat of my mind's eye instead, conceding full licence, though singly, to whatever may lurk there. This morning I am flat: my sex water, my sentiment Barrie, my stomach flaccid like a drip-dry shirt. The prairie foxes snoop in the dawn of my brain; trailing their green satin tails, dislodging the rotting cones of the conifers. They grin yellow teeth like sultan's coffin-nails, raise their legs decorously, and piddle, leaving their water like a pint of mercury bumping between my temples amongst the ghosts of faded noises painted on walls. 'Securité: Sobriété!'; 'Poujade avec Raison!'; 'Oui, Oui, Oui!' all the way home. The word informs the mercury, which takes a fuller, more leaden command of my brain. Home is now just a few unrolled miles away across the wide-eye fields of Normandy. In the moment of realization I become a straw man, slumped over, sucking Disque Bleu.

It won't do. I get up quickly, inclining my head towards the terrace beyond the pond and the plump, vicarious sailors. Jan looks up with

her leader frown. She stacks up the pale, frozen sentences daily in case we should meet friends who might talk about the news. She taps her cigarette irritably with her fore-finger, as if she had a grudge against the particular piece of ground where the ash falls. Jan still smokes like a school-girl who is a little afraid the cork tip may burn her lips. But then it's a duty like reading the leaders.

'I'm wandering over to the balustrade.'

She nods, peering into the tea pot, and I begin to walk away from her. Perhaps in rehearsal; though for quite what I don't know.

'Don't start sketching,' Jan calls after me. I turn back, and lay my sketch-book on the table as a mark of parole. Jan smiles her tight dismissal smile. Two Americans go past with Rolleis. He has a big one and she has a small one, after the best matrimonial balance of things. Happily, I don't look like a painter. He stoops to angle a low shot of the pond through the chair-backs. Cunning. Perhaps he's not blind after all.

I start to walk away from Jan again, and begin to feel the cleaness of the morning. Children whistle past me on roller-skates down the newly-swept paths, abusing the men with the brooms. I look up at the sky. The albumen is hardening in the crown of the egg. It will be a sparkling day. In the south the sun will ricochet off the gnarled trunks, the red earth, and the grease greens of the Van Gogh country. In central Italy the dust houses of the hill-top towns will grin their black, gap-teeth in continued defiance of gravity.

With the slime drying out of the sky above us I wonder again about Jan and the Congo children; about the relation of the individual to the general. I can find no satisfactory bridge in the short walk to the balustrade.

This trip we've crossed the Somme and the Marne; blood-rivers in the flat, gentle fields, whose names mean no more to us than the names of their poets. Now we're in Paris, sixteen years after another war which, again, is no less remote to us than it is to this morning. Jan was in the States then; cello-wrapped, with hygenic pig-tails. I was in Cambridge. I remember the altimeter we pinched from the Heinkel. It was spattered with a sticky, black substance, which Davy said was the pilot's brains. We washed it and fixed it to my bicycle. Then, after the war, there was Jan and my love! She had a smile which seemed peculiarly to own a liquid dimension, so that when she sprang it in the half light it would

literally dazzle, like a magic crescent moon, or the blade of a sickle.How should I have known then that it was better for me to be alone. Even now, when she's a hundred yards away, I feel a new freedom. No sketch-book; but paper enough in my wallet. Perhaps here's the bridge, or rather the lack of it, I was seeking a moment ago. Perhaps we are all locked within our individual selves; perhaps there is no overt communication, and that is why we can own no part in the Marne or the Congo children.

I rest my chin on the cool balustrade and light another Disque Bleu. The haze hasn't lifted from the distance. That must be the Eiffel Tower like a pencil mark on an opaque glass plate. The Americans come up and tell each other so. They are too near for my comfort, even if they were gods; though I bear them no grudge as persons. The magnifier over the ground-glass screen of your Rollei won't help you, Mac! I move away from them, so that I'm looking straight down the Champs-Elysées, across the cars which nuzzle each other around the Place de la Concorde. The Arc de Triomphe is indistinct too, like the rear of some circus-decked elephant.

How straight the Champs-Elysées is, plunging away into the distance between the legs of the elephant. My childhood was troubled with pictures. I can remember I used to think, years ago, that I would never be in total despair because I would always be curious to discover what lay around the next bend in the road. Just that. It was a naive, cradle sentiment, and I turned it over and over in my mind as now I turn a sketch beneath my pencil until, suddenly, it becomes fixed, inviolable, with not a line too fat or too thin, nor a focus misplaced by more than the thickness of a silk veil. With something like the same physical shock in consolidation my mind precipitated an answer that was no less inevitable than the finished sketch. What if the road should have no turning? Might it not just go on, perhaps like the trans-Australian railway; parallel silver streamers stretched out over a parched land to a dusty eternity.

I shudder, and almost wish I hadn't moved away from the Americans. Perhaps I should call out a cheery greeting. After all, enough of them hooted and flashed their head-lamps at our registration plate right across Europe. We reacted then with a proper British sense of embarrassed propriety, or else Jan raised her hand with something like the sovereign's indulgence.

I turn round, but they have gone. Jan is still reading the *Telegraph* under the trees. Behind her, the deranged tart is spitting more oaths at her imaginary companion. A breeze carries the strings of the listing boats in wide arcs across the surface of the pond.

I look at Jan. The same isolation divides the two of us as divides us both from the Congo children. She can't share my world; whilst for my own part I doubt whether she has one any more, though I've never despised the confines of the vicarage garden and the croquet lawn. Yet there was a time when even the invisible filaments of our thoughts would dovetail. At fourteen she fed a rag-doll progressively through all the available processes of the first model Kenwood mixer, and then drank a substantial proportion of the result with astonishing incantations. I loved her for that. Another doll, a small, plastic one this time, she froze naked in a tumbler of water and then turned out on the drawing-room mantelpiece before a county party. It bore the inscription 'Eve and the Ice Age', and nobody noticed it until it began to melt. Her father wasn't pleased.

The breeze has coiled one of the slacker boat-strings into loops on the surface of the water. It isn't sufficiently strong to stir the trees. I wander back towards Jan, skirting the chairs. Suddenly I want to be close to her again, if only for a moment. But then my life's like that. A fortuitous entanglement like the crossing of the boat-strings. Then once more I must be free; even from the things I love.

'The Crawleys,' Jan says, looking up. 'Their do a week tomorrow. I've just remembered. We haven't sent them a post-card.' She lets me take her hand reluctantly. Perhaps because of the tart. She needn't have worried. Over her shoulder I can see that the tart is insolubly locked in her own world. One moment she's any woman drinking coffee under the trees. The next some sense alerts her eyes, and she's spitting broken phrases as if the violence of her breath could keep her invisible tormentor at bay. As suddenly she's a free being, until the threatening presence becomes unbearable again, and she must answer him. I smile at Jan.

'No! No post-card, and no Crawley party.'

'Peter, we can't just.'

'We can. And there's more. The firm, darling. I want out'.

Jan frees her hand. It withers away from me over the crumpled

Telegraph. She smoothes the paper out because she collects full-length drawings of Khruschev. She thinks he's 'sweet'; it has something to do with those cartoon turn-ups. I pounce on her other hand, which she's forgotten. She still fails to remember it.

'This time I've made up my mind.'

The tart is being besieged again.

'I want one of those formal declarations of love.'

'I love you, Peter.'

'Yet so listless?'

Jan brightens. The sickle smile is there again: the blade turned flat towards me in the sunshine, though only for an instant.

'*Why*, Peter?'

'You know the "whys". At least theoretically.'

'But my intellect can't grasp them?'

'Not intellect.'

Jan begins to uncurl a croissant from the centre, with the concentration of a child trying to peel an apple in a single paring. I break mine in two.

'Is one of your hang-over mornings the best time for the decision?'

'I hardly drank last night.'

'But I know the signs when you inhale in the mornings as if you wanted to swallow the smoke like medicine.'

'Fair!' I begin to smooth out the latest portrayal of Khruschev's trousers for something to do with my hands. 'Commercial Art is killing me. Can't you see that? It's a horrible death.'

A *closeted* death!

The tart is angry again. She's bent over her shallow cup muttering threats like a snake-charmer whose livelihood is sulking in its basket. Jan is withdrawn too.

'Peter you know we need your salary. And I *like* your work. Those little Detergent Girls were sweet.'

So here it is. Like that over the coffee cups. I can't keep the bitterness out of my voice.

'And the dog-food boy, I suppose,' I say slowly. 'Christ', girl, that "sweetness" was aimed and measured to an eyelash! You're reacting superbly. Tumbling with the exact response which was calculated for the entire British womanhood. But I'm not surprised! The choice of

available eye colours went through computers. Incidentally, just how much of my dog-food have you bought?'

'Don't be silly, Peter.'

'Silly? Hell! Why silly? All mothers just yearn for a child like my dog-food boy. *You* want my dog-food boy! So–'

Jan drops her hand beneath the table.

'I'm sorry. I really am terribly sorry–' I break off helplessly; resting my forehead on my knuckles. She is carrying our child.

For a moment we say nothing. The sky is glazed over blue now into a fine piece of porcelain. It's so brittle you could poke a pin through it. There are things I want to paint here. My way.

I smile to try and bring Jan back; reaching across Khruschev.

'You see, it won't work. It can't work. Take those girls' blouses. The whiteness didn't even come from my palette! It was the purest form of white light that physics could convert to the printing press. I was instructed to leave a blank where the blouses were to be.–No, I'm not kidding! It was like grafting electronically-sculptured breasts to the Venus de Milo.'

Jan says nothing. If she came back like a lash to the effect that it were better not for me to compare myself, however rhetorically, with the creator of the Venus de Milo I should sing aloud and send that curious waiter without a right hand for champagne. But no. There is no response. Nothing to tell me that she grasps even the elements of my frustration. No bridge to deny that we are anything other than locked in our several worlds. But then I envy her the peace of her world. Would that mine could be reduced to the tranquillity of hers. To that sort of flat surveillance she brings to my work where the only question is between 'sweet' or 'not sweet', like the current illustration of Khruschev's trousers. I may be blind though. Perhaps it's just that I can't reach her any more.

'You do have the week-ends,' Jan says. She begins picking crumbs unthinkingly off the table-cloth, using the moist pad of her fore-finger like a magnet, and depositing them on her plate. I shake my head slowly.

'I'm sick of it. How do you explain to an ad-man that if you want really glinting whiteness you must use yellow and blue shadows? I'm sick of the specifications laid down by computers and statisticians. Did you know that little boys with one sock down sell forty per cent more cough-mixture than little boys depicted any other way? Well I'm sick of drawing rumpled socks. If I hadn't been a good draughtsman

I would never have got into the wretched business in the first place.'

'Meaning that if you hadn't married your "county horse-girl" you would be free to ride your painty bicycle around on the cellar floor and then heave up the flag-stones for auction?'

I smile. Some part of Jan is still there.

'Not meaning that at all.'

'We must eat!'

'All three of us. And we shall. But not at the price of Denicky's Knitwear, that's more discreetly sexy than a tiger-skin rug etc.'

'Peter, I *love* your pullovers!'

'Then pull over.'

'You're just going to be silly again.' Jan lights a cigarette with an awful concentration. 'Your seaside posters are gorgeously inviting anyway. I love those too, and we know lots of nice people in town.' The feminine non-sequitur.

'Jan, just don't use "love" of my Commercial Art, or else I will buy one of those bicycles. Also, the Crawleys are creeps.'

'Peter, please!'

Deadlock, I suspect. I lean back. Some of the roller-skaters are circling round us. We've become the centre of a game. Jan gives them her Brownie Pack smile. I like that. The one-handed waiter comes over to shoo them away. I wonder whether the total lack of logic that characterizes children's games will set them whooping and spinning around the tart in a minute.

Miraculously, Jan has nearly uncurled the croissant: easing back the crisp brown beak; exposing its doughy underside. She loses patience and tears the beak off.

'Go on for a few years, Peter, anyway.'

'I can't. Let's move back to Suffolk; I'd even rather be a pedagogue. With an old-stone third class hons. one need never starve.'

'Peter, you can't be serious. Why the *salary*–the baby!'

I can see Jan's really upset now. I hadn't meant to frighten her. I get hold of her hand again.

'From three thousand to seven hundred–it's a slump, I know. But don't you see. I can't go on like this. It needn't be as bad as that. I can illustrate. There'll be commissions. All right. But not specifications from computers.'

'You're being snobbish, Peter.–Arty-snobbish, with your inverted pride!' She speaks without conviction; muddling her words. Already she's withdrawing from me into the world where I can't reach her. The paper has become crumpled. Khruschev is forgotten in our individual war. Even as potential assailants we are withdrawn into our own selves.

I look back through the new leaves towards the Louvre. Below us, and out of sight, the traffic noses perpetually around the Place de la Concorde. The children are still shouting. They're near to us, and make more noise than the traffic. The decision is laid there before me like a physical thing amongst the coffee cups. That is between my coffee, and Jan's teacup.

I become aware of the wrought-iron chair-backs cast into figures of eight. My focus is blurred, but then it clears. I leave Jan; though only for a moment. My back is turned towards her and no one is watching. The nearest chair-back snaps easily. My hands, at least, are strong.

NIGHTTIME ENCOUNTER | by Vincenzo Cardarelli

Well hobo, you and your fellows!
with your white sneakers
and enormous corduroys,
and that dead cigar
dangling between your lips
like a forgotten notion;
you owl-eyed dunce of every town,
its aimless sniffing dog
who twist through the crowd
and stray at each new smell–
you might have called at
all the ports of the world.
You've made not one but a dozen
expeditions of Columbus,
around the globe.
Did you discover the ocean
before you sailed it?
and understand the life of
numberless cities?
On what map,
as you strolled the earth with your finger
did you plot the routes of your journeys?
And still, stubborn idiot you walk these continents before you
like a vast explorer!
Hardly ashore you'd take
necessity's blind rut
that looks like home
wherever it is,
not even asking–where are we?
Cast off there, you settled right down.
And I'll not question your trades.
Surely you suffered them all
and don't have any,
like those brothers of yours
in faraway latitudes

who welcomed you and gave no greeting
acknowledged you without surprise
watched you go without regret
(haven't you done this too)
eh lonesome!
Life is like that
among your kind, all linked
to the same chain.
In steamy taverns
you spooned it from the common dish;
then evenings, in a party,
tried the joys of the road.
Huddled for a handful of days
on transient cots
naked and together, you lay down
between the same sheets
trading the things
nearest the flesh,
and forced shoulder to shoulder
you loosened your tongues
but the heart said nothing.
For weariness racked you
and each loathed his anguish in the other
and munched his own silence
and mankind was a long way off.
You kept in touch
like cargo waiting at the wharves
not knowing what land will unload it.
These neutral sojourns
of your life, aloof
salamander flights through flame,
little by little forlornly
fill all time.
And now you shuffle like a frightened
boy who wonders what he's done.
And mournfully you chew your butt . . .
For comfort you go glancing

sideways at the tart
across the street
who carries her parallel loneness
with less grudge.

DAYBREAK | by Giorgio Caproni

My love, in the vapors of a bar
at daybreak, how long the winter is
how cold the waiting! Here
where marble chills in the blood and eyes
turn hard, I listen: out of the lonely
roar beyond the frost what streetcar
opens and shuts eternally
its desolate doors?–My pulse stands still,
and if in all the subtle din
this wineglass chatters between my teeth,
perhaps it's the echo of those wheels. My dear
love, as in your place now the sun
looms, don't let me know that at the doorsill
waiting for your step, I wait for death!

NIGHT IS THE HOMETOWN | by Alfonso Gatto

A man to where he never was,
returns. One night I heard
how a smile rocked me
like an almond in a guitar.
A visit, this slumber,
but night was joyous
like a negress who cannot speak.
A townful of white children
went forward to meet her.

A was sound I in a guitar
an almond of sleep.
Laugh why don't you, and jangle the medals
big coins of faces?
A boisterous man cried out
impressed on the dark.
He opened his truck at the lights
to find air for a moth.
Like this one–he said–we are
hurrying all toward death
the town we return to.

TRIESTE | by Umberto Saba

I have crossed the whole city.
Then climbed a hillside,
populous at first, up there abandoned,
locked in by a low wall–
a corner where I sit lonely;
and to me it seems that where it ends
the city would end too.

Trieste has a moody
grace. If it pleases you
it's like an urchin, rude and greedy,
with blue eyes and hands too big
to give you a flower;
it's like love
along with jealousy.
From this slope I discover each church,
each street that leads to the swarmed beach,
or to the hill where on the stony
crest the last house clings.
Around each thing
there turns

a strange tormenting air,
my native air.

My city alive in every way
has made me a corner, and for my life
wistful and shy.

THIRD OF DECEMBER | by Vittorio Sereni

At the last roar of the rails
you have your peace, where the city
in a flight of streets and bridges
is flung into the countryside
and the passerby goes unaware of you
as you are unaware of the hunters'
echoes that graze you.
Maybe peace is yours indeed
and the eyes we shut forever
opened now once more
are amazed
that you still die a little
for us each year.
this day.

LAZARUS' DOG | by Leonardo Sinisgali

You rove alone in the night
leaving without trace
or smell among the black rose
brambles that scratch my face.
You move as the shade does,
your shoulders
more futile and light

than butterfly shadows
over the waters.

I'll find you by scent
beyond the red coasts,
and suddenly start to your horn.
I used to bring you
the first goodmorning,
a muzzle's odor of thyme.

And in my mouth I'd bring
fish from the dry shore,
the wounded moorhens from the fern.
Your blood was nimbler
than my legs, your shoulder
stronger than the bar
where the river's voice is gone.
Handsome and proud,
you were all new again
and straight as the wings
of the hawk shot down.

Transtated by Sonia Raiziss & Alfredo de Palchi.

Ismael

(Being a fairy tale extracted from a writer's diary and concerning the two meetings, twin matings and tormentings of the Queen of Light and the Queen of Darkness).

Saturday dawn; July 25

Last night about eleven he was standing in a doorway on Mercer Street, a Puerto Rican boy wearing white ducks and red shirt, lovely

he was, and it seemed to me he smiled to me but being me I thought no and walked on for two blocks before thinking yes. So I went back and there he still was only a woman with him this time. Yet when I passed he gave me a smile, such a smile, unmistakably a smile full of 'here you are come back again to love me as I love myself' and I burst into laughter at the pleasures of life, but walked on. At Houston Street I bethought myself, perhaps he will follow, so I stopped and LO! he cometh lazily–but passed me right by without a glance and I swore at myself, a vain unworthy creature. And I walked back to Prince Street then thought again and again returned and now there he was, now both of us smiling, both laughing and finally speaking at the same time, he saying merely 'hello' while I: 'Isn't it about time we said hello?' We talked and his name is Ismael and we went for a drink at Tommy's Bar and then came home to make it as it was never made before, as surely God in His Glory made it to be made, and he is lovely, 22, hung like a horse with a little body of steel, and laughs he laughs andloves himselfand perhaps me with a joy that is foreign. My hands now smell of him. And we sneaked up after on the roof here only in our shirts to catch the breeze and his body against me always his body for he knows the truth about the soul, and his white teeth glare and glitter and laugh when he smiles or talks. My body's known a miracle. Ismael, imagine! My blood exults, my skin joyous from lips to groin. When I walked him back home to his mother's he said to come see him when I pleased and he said he would come to me and he put his dark fingers to my lips and said hasta mañana. Then I danced down the streets and into the park to lie dizzy under the stars and the trees until the cops chased me.

Saturday noon

Sobriety and reality, after some sleep. In my haste to get my pants off last night all the dollar bills fell out of my pocket–about five singles. Only one of them is still there. It is true he told me he was out of work–when we were going up Bleecker Street to Tommy's Bar, he said: 'Why we don go home to you house? I ain got money for a drink. I had pneumonia and now don work one month.' (I paid for his Schenley's-and-Seven-Up but felt a twitch of mistrust even as our legs touched and our eyes wrestled–after all, I've never had a Porto Rican before.) And

he is no Puritan, as my flesh will testify, and it is probably somehow better to take money lying around than to ask for it. But it alters the ecstasy, reminds me of the mind toiling and the mind toiling. And makes me feel like the foolish sentimental fagola.

Sunday; July 26

As no word from Ismael, kept my appointment with the Bergs last night. A dinner party on the terrace of their pent-house. Cool starry evening, delicious food, much to drink, charming guests. Ugh to it all. Smart young moderns–the women use obscenities, though of course only among their own set. One can even talk in mixed company of one's ho-mo-secks-you-all adventures; no, not adventures. This is the world where people have experiences not adventures. Publishing people. Advertising people. Oh I am dying, Egypt, dying! I sit mainly in silence, feeling as I felt at sixteen when I was in love with Bernie Schwartz–the beautiful anguish; how tedious and tawdry everyone else's life has suddenly become. There is only one possible place, one passable person in all the world. A wind came up and Sally suggested having cognac indoors. Peter, however, asked me to stay with him on the terrace while he smoked his cigar. I knew this meant a man-to-man and a conversation I have been sure we would one day have. We lean over the flowerpots and look across Manhattan, avoiding each other's eyes. 'I'm numb,' he keeps saying. 'I used to be a great talker, but I was always talking clichés. But when I stop talking clichés, I'm all muddled and I have nothing to say.' He is bored with Sally, longs for new love and passion, pleasure and pain, keeps repeating: 'I'm going to go –maybe in a week, a year, five years.' . . . 'One day I'll leave.' But he is too rich, too successful now to abandon anything but his dreams, or rather the fulfillment of them. We talk of love, and I torture him a little: 'Ah, the taste of a stranger's mouth! . . . Love is the only ecstasy we can know ! . . . To go off for a short fling on the side is empty, meaningless; when there is someone waiting at home, however awful to return to, we aren't giving our all to the new love. When to lose this love is to lose everything–ah then, there is the exquisiteness and horror . . . Tonight almost for the first time in my life I know why poets have spent so many words on love . . . Yes, it is unmanly to live a life of love, and yet when

you feel compelled toward it, there can be no other.' And Peter says: 'I will go. You'll see.'

Though it was still early, I left soon after, pleading a headache. But didn't want to go home, so stopped for a while in one of the few queer bars still open here in the Village. A Saturday night, and naturally Madison Avenue was represented in force. Mobs of dacron suits crowned by vacant, stupid, unlived faces, cute as buttons most of them, like an army of Tom Sawyers. Where are the screaming queens, the gigolos, the outrageous Harlem faggots–where is Ismael?

I stand at the bar for an hour or so, eavesdropping. The conversations are refined, witty, slightly bitchy like those up in Peter Berg's penthouse. I stand, enduring the unsuffered, the wholesome, the unwise. All-American boys who at thirty or forty or fifty are still All-American boys. Fresh-faced, clean-cut; who dares apply words like sodomy, pederasty to them? Who would want to apply the acts? If Tom Sawyer's desires are unnatural, illegal, surely Aunt Polly and the rest of America must agree that nature and the laws are wrong.

My neat gins taste, under the circumstances, like ice cream soda. I begin to feel like a hood, a pervert, an impostor. But wait! This army of Tom Sawyers is as perverted as I am, and our perversion isn't merely a question of physical detail. Like Peter Berg, we are perverted deeply, in our dreams, suffering out the doom of the butt-end of romance–destined never to profoundly have whom we love nor to profoundly love whom we have. We are creatures living in despite of ourselves, contemptuous of those who are foolish enough to love us, adoring of those who find us unworthy.

I want Ismael–perhaps outside the traditional doom. I want him for the pleasure of his laughter, for his joy, his vanity, his narcissism, for his arms like a vice, for his so-serious no-nonsense philosopher's love-making face. But my mind works out a series of trickeries, such as that he made me say goodnight in a doorway that wasn't his, lest I realize about the money and come hunting him out. I look at the bed and think love was made here, created here, exhausted here–but for him there may have been nothing extraordinary; another American, a quick drink, a meeting of eyes then arms then hips, some talk and goodbye or hasta mañana in some other life, plus a pocketful of silver.

Left the queer bar at midnight and went home by way of Washing-

ton Square. On the railing round the park–the Meat Rack, so-called–sat the eternal hosts of black and white angels in skintight pants, waiting to fly toward love or money. Somber and joyless. Ashes. I pitied them no Ismael.

Monday; July 27

So with the help of a few drinks, I gathered up my courage and went to see him last night. The doorway was no deception.

He was wearing only shorts and Japanese sandals; seemed pleased to see me. His body even more beautiful than on Friday–so too his face, especially the long dark eyes. His charm extravagant. A white uncle and a black aunt, sitting stiff as playing cards, were visiting the television in the parlor. ('They don unnerstan English,' says Ismael, raising an eyebrow, and to them in Spanish he brags of me shamelessly, saying I am a very famous writer.) The apartment excessively, sterilely clean, all in bad taste or tasteless, without character; ugly printed wallpaper, ugly printed seat covers. And Ismael.

He sits me down opposite the relatives and gives me beer and heavily begins to entertain me. Photograph albums. I steal glances at his chest or back or legs or crotch; our eyes don't meet. Scores of photos of Ismael; none of them please me. 'Don you like even this one . . . or this one . . . or this . . .?' He is distressed and whines childishly; 'Oh you don like me. Nobody likes me.' Inexorably, I rise to the bait: 'Yes, Ismael, I like you.'

He shakes his head gravely. 'Don like me. I don like nobody, only Frankie.'

My heart sinks, and I remember that at Tommy's Bar he (unnecessarily, I then thought) mentioned a friend, an advertising man, who was spending the summer in Europe. Ismael brings another album, opens it to the back and shows me numerous pictures of Frankie–Tom Sawyer. 'Frankie is the only person in this world I love.'

'Does he love you?'

'Frankie says: Ismael, I love you But.'

'But what?'

He hesitates, then shrugs, smiles sourly. 'I am a Porto Rican. I don blame him. I don like my people either.'

I stare hard at the pictures and ask Ismael how it is he goes with other men; I am fishing, but it's a dragon that I pull out of the waters: 'It don mean nothing. I gotta lotta love inside me but it ain for everybody.'

I feel strangled, quickly look through the album. Elegant East Side queens. Ismael too is surrounded by an army of Tom Sawyers but–though he's fairer than mulatto–his spirit is Nigger Jim.

After the photos, the souvenirs. He has been in New York for eight years, so has a diploma from junior-high, report cards. I look through the cards. He was not a good student, but in that section called Character Rating he has all A's. He Respects the Rights of Others; he Works Well With Others: he Shows Great Effort. This is obviously not the boy who would take money off the floor of another's bedroom. A teacher would surely know who covets the purse even if she can't tell which of her students will break a heart, will destroy a soul.

The television show is over. The aunt and uncle stand up. Ismael takes them to the door. Returns. Stands in the middle of the room. Takes my eyes with his. Holds them. Kicks off his sandals. Drops his shorts and my breath like boulders.

But it isn't like the first time. We have lost our innocence, our anonymities. We aren't bashing selfishly toward our own pleasures. We (I) seek to please. Not only does my body want his, but my heart wants his, and his wants Frankie's, and Frankie's wants–whose? How many men are here with us in bed, flailing and laboring with us, locked with us not only in the body's terrific heat but in the heart's terrible romance? I come after he does, wake to find him stroking me. Am overwhelmed with gratitude, despise myself for it.

I want to spend the night there, but he says his mother will soon be back. I ask him to come with me. 'We go out now' is his vague reply. As we dress, he takes a bit of paper from his pocket; 'Look what the grocer gave me.' It is the slip with my name and phone number. 'Why didn't you call me yesterday?' I ask.

'You say to phone when I feel like it.'

'But you said hasta mañana.'

We leave his house, go up to the parkpa, ss the Meat Rack. Three or four of the boys call 'Hi, Ismael!' My lips tighten. He teases me: 'How

you like to take one home? We do it all together?' I say nothing. We walk up Fifth Avenue.

He: Did you drink a lot before you come to me?

I: Why?

He: Just tell me.

I: I had a drink, yes.

He: *One* drink I smell already on your breath. All the others I see from how you walk. Walk straight! It don look nice if people see you go zig-zag.

I pause to take some deep breaths and he goes ahead. I would have to run to catch up with him, but my pride won't let me. I call. He stops, turns and waits. But my joy of him is strangling.

We go as far as Fourteenth Street, then around and down Sixth Avenue, back toward the Village. This, he tells me, is a walk he takes every night. I don't have to ask if he ever reaches home alone. I see the way men look at him, and I am not flattered , but jealous. And I see the look he returns to most of them. Like the first look he gave me: eyes loaded.

We exchange funny stories from our adventures. He becomes annoyed that I am taking too loud, that I say 'him' when I *mean* 'him' and not, as he says, 'a person' or some other euphemism. 'If you don take care when you talk I will go home.' Outraged at being made to feel vulgar, uncouth, I bellow: 'I wasn't taught my manners by your Madison Avenue closet queens. I'm a writer, Ismael, like you told your aunt and uncle'.

He softens and smiles. 'Put my name in a story.'

'No. Someone already has.'

'Melville', he says to my surprise.

Back in the Village. He wants to go to Tommy's Bar because we have already been there, and he is not fond of new places. On the way I speak of a Yoga exercise. My impulse is to lie down on the pavement and do it, in spite of my clothes, as I would with any of my friends. But I am afraid of Ismael's disapproval. I say: 'I'll show it to you when we get home'.

'What home?'

'My home.'

'Why you so sure I go back with you?'

I do not speak until we reach Tommy's. My bitterness makes me petty. When I ask what he wants to drink, he says 'the same thing'–meaning of course Schenley's-and-Seven-Up (it might as well be ice cream soda). I tell him I cannot remember what the same thing is. So he reminds me and adds: 'And you will take neat gin.' We drink; he talks of his job as an operator in a hat factory. We leave and do the Village–ending up in a little bar on Sixth Avenue. His eyes have begun again to look for mine. But I know my pride would not allow me to take him home, and it would not even allow me to admit it has been wounded. Even my pride has pride. It cannot say: you have hurt me, and I want to go home alone.

We leave. Both fairly drunk. I stare at people sitting on the terrace of the O. Henry. Ismael, irritated and impatient, calls to me. I turn, grab him and hold him tight. 'Will you cut out that crap!' he cries. We're crossing Sixth Avenue. I beg of him the coup de grâce by shouting for all the world to hear: 'Ismael, Ismael, you're such a silly little girl.'

He goes ahead rapidly and silently, like a sword. I keep up with him. 'Ismael, are you angry?' Silence. 'Are you?' Silence. I don't know what to do. I am not frightened or anxious really, but mainly concerned with my pride. 'Ismael, say something, for God's sake.' Silence. We reach the park and stop in full sight and hearing of the boys on the Meat Rack.

'I'm sorry,' I say wearily.

He gives me a rather friendly swat on the belly and says: 'You better go home now. Thank you for everything.'

The sword plunges ahead. The moment of truth and love–the instant of separation.

And I lose sight of the beautiful silhouette in the shadows of the Judson Church. I go home dizzy, fall asleep at once. A restless night. Horrible dreams. I keep waking, but don't want to wake for fear of the feelings that await me. I pull sleep over my head like a fortress. At seven o'clock I wake in profoundest misery and remember that he told me he wakes every morning at seven, just as if he were still going to work. There are sobs inside me. I fly back to sleep. I sleep. I wake at nine and decide to masturbate though my senses are blank. It is not sexual but purgative. This is to be the first in a lifetime of orgasms that will not belong to Ismael, and it is to be arrived at for literary reasons, so to speak. To punctuate my love affair. The phone rings. Marty. He asks

me how I am. Automatically I say terrible, gloomy, sunk in sadness and woe. But as we talk I realize that I am not sad, perhaps hurt–but how should I be sad when there are a million anonymous and innocent Puerto Ricans in New York and a whole island full of them in the Caribbean?

Rites of Spring | by Penny Jackson

They are north-eastern Canadian Indians. They have no other name for themselves. The name of their fathers they no longer know. Their heritage is an unspoken, unspeakable thing, for they speak English now. Speak it strangely, haltingly, although it is the only language they have learned, for it is not theirs. It is merely a borrowed tool, and the sounds of it do not fit their mouths, nor the words of it their thoughts; so they prefer not to speak; and the white people, when they come in the summer, call them silent, and sometimes, therefore, thieving.

'Hey Joe', they say. 'Joe', because all the men are 'Joe', or 'Mac', or 'Jack'. They have no other names. Their own names were lost with their language before they were born. So they say, 'hey Joe, stop pussy-footin' around, will ya. Don't be so damn'd spooky. Let's know you're here.'

And Joe says, 'damn' right, boss,' and whistles a tune that none of them has ever heard, not even Joe himself. Still, it is right. They laugh at his 'damn' because he does not know how to swear correctly, but at the same time they shiver inwardly at his tune because they are good hunters, good fisherman, who kill quickly and well with one shot or one sharp crack of a knife handle on the head of a gasping fish. They are not pleased with themselves when they hear a bird that they have shot flopping in the underbrush; and they have trailed a wounded deer all day, and returned to camp weary-faced, cursing the hurt deer that they could not find to finish off.

They are good hunters and Joe's tune makes them cringe inwardly as does the trail of a shot deer, for they sense in it a wound that will not

heal but must kill, slowly, agonizingly–a wound that sets great soft dark eyes rolling, pleading for death even while once-light hooves drag heavy through the wood, leaving a trail of blood-clogged prints, in search of life.

They laugh at him, with laughter as different from the way they laugh at home as is the way they walk. At home they walk the brisk, leather-heel-clicking walk of business men: here it is a loose-gaited shamble that goes for miles without tiring. They speak more slowly, too, more softly, and less. Because there is less that needs saying.

And when they go home they are bewildered for a few days, and their wives are cross and picky because they are not sure if their husbands wanted to come back, and they wonder; they are right to wonder. For the men look at their slim wives and remember Joe's fat, sloppy squaw with her rot-black teeth and filthy hair, and think how wonderful is civilization; and almost not-knowing it they envy Joe because his wife does not ask him how the trip was, and she does not take his rifle and stuff it away in an attic or hang it on a smug rack next to a placard on which is glued a stuffed fish who is out of his element, and looks it.

They laugh, and Joe looks at them from under the canoe that he is carrying up from the lake and his narrow lips spread showing his yellowed teeth in a grin. Then he starts to whistle again as he lets the dripping canoe onto the ground. They would have him gone with his whistle, so one of them hands him a quarter, and says, 'okay, Joe.'

Taking it, he grins and answers, 'okay, boss.' As he moves off, around the lake to his home, they shiver and laugh again because Joe says 'okay' differently, as if it were the beginning of a word that he does not know how to finish.

It is summer then, and when Joe is almost home he sees his youngest son sitting on a greying stump at the edge of the cove, watching the waffle-woven water, smooth and ripple patched, murked green now in August. He does not smile at the boy, and goes on into the house without saying, 'what are you dreaming about, son?' Because he knows that if there were ever words to tell it, they are in the other language.

So he goes on into the house which is little more than a shack with its two dirt-floored rooms and windows that are only glassless frames. He

tosses the quarter into a wooden box which he has carved, in one piece, from the trunk of a tree. It is made of pine, carven from one of the northern pines whose trunks rise limbless for the length of ten tall men before spindly, needled branches bunch out so it looks as if a scrawny bush had been set atop a pillar. Soft pine wood, but strong enough to hold the money until Joe's youngest son will, as his brothers have, scoop it out and go off. Already he goes for half the year to a school. Joe does not know where or how. The Indian Commission takes care of it.

Then, finally, he will go away and not come back. This is an irrevocable fact that Joe and his wife accept. There is no need to talk about it. There is, in fact, no way to talk about it. The other sons have gone, this one will go, and will not return for there will be nothing to return to.

Joe's father sits by the table where the box is and turns his face, walnut-stain yellow now in age. His eyes, solid and imperturbable as onyx beads, follow the quarter as Joe flicks it between his thumb and forefinger so that it flashes in a silver arc, then plonks and settles among the other coins.

He watches it, looks at it, but does not touch it although he would like to. He would like to hold it, to rub his fingers over its cool, smooth roundness, to put it in his pocket and forget it was there until he reached in and, surprised to find it, drew it out and flicked it in the air to watch it tumble over and over making small silver spheres and landing 'plunk', flat and hard in his palm.

This is what he thinks, but he does not touch it because it is his grandson's and he knows, beyond words, that if he touches it, its charm will be broken and it will not carry the boy, who must go. That it will not carry the boy, but will hold him back. So he does not touch it because the boy must go. This he knows with the wisdom of a forgotten language.

And this is what the boy knows when he comes in from watching the cove and sees his grandfather staring at the coins. He thinks: my grandfather wants to hold a coin. He wants it, not for what it is, but for what it is not. He does not want it to spend or to save so that he can buy with it later. He wants it for itself. But he will not touch it because it is mine. If it were mine, I would give it to him, but it is not yet mine. The white

men have given it to my father because he carries their canoe, which it takes two of them to lift, and because he shows them where the biggest pike are, and because he takes them where the bear is. So it is my father's now. But when I go away it will be mine. And then I will take one coin, the finest, the smoothest, the most silver coin, and I will give it to my grandfather.

He takes the old man's arm then, and they go outside, past the cove to a clearing at the water's edge where the day's end sunlight wavers through the pine tops, plays along the curls of peeling birch bark, and settles into the cracking-dry needles underfoot. They stand there in a spray of green tinted sunlight and look out at the round lake across the inlet which joins it to the long lake. Hearing a loon's laugh, the boy answers it in kind. For a while they laugh back and forth until the boy sends a peal of his own laughter rolling out into the evening, piercing through the smoke of burned-out day which rises from the lake. The loon dives and stays under so long that when he comes up again he is only a black speck bobbing along on the water. The old man chuckles, his fingers bite into the boy's shoulder, and he says, 'you didn't learn that in school.' Then they grin at each other and walk back toward the house.

The boy thinks: no. This I have not learned in school. And he begins to divide the things he has learned in the school where the Indian Commission sends him from the things he knows. These are the things he has learned: that Canadian Indians are fortunate because they were not put on reservations but are allowed to live, that he is fortunate to be sent to school so that he will not live the way his father has, but will make a better world, that he is fortunate to have been born with fairer skin than most of the others for that makes him less of an Indian and means that it will be easier for him to get on in the city.

And this is what he knows: that loneliness is worse than segregation, that to be silent in a familiar language you no longer know is better than to speak in an unfamiliar language you have learned, that to give a silver coin with no meaning to your grandfather is better than to receive it and a pat on the head from the Indian Commission. And this, above all, he knows: that there is some lost, unlearned, almost-forgotten thing which is the sum of all his knowledge.

It is this, partly, that he has been thinking about, sitting on that greying stump at the edge of the cove, and now he has decided.

When they reach the house, he finds his father, outside, cutting wood with a thin-worn saw that flexes at a touch and shrieks from within the tree that it is cutting. The boy takes a log and, standing it on end, splits it down the middle with such force that the axe plunges deep into the stump he has used for a block and stops there, handle quivering. His father looks up at the sound of the blow, and the boy blurts out his decision.

'I have decided that I do not want to go out to the school this year.'

His father tosses back the thick black hair that has fallen across his eyes and stands, arms akimbo, looking at him.

'Why?'

'I prefer to stay here for one year.'

'The Commission people will come and force you to go.'

'Before they realize that I am not coming the snow will have fallen and they will not be able to get in.'

'But you must learn. You must become wise from their teachings.'

They stand looking at one another–the boy and his father, who now is not the Indian that carries canoes for the white men. Finally the boy answers.

'There is another wisdom which I must have first.'

The old man walks to the boy then and stands beside him, and Joe, who is no longer 'Joe', says, 'did your grandfather tell you this?'

The old man starts to chuckle as the boy shakes his head, and then he speaks to his son: 'did anyone tell you?'

Joe tightens his lips then and goes back to cutting wood, and the boy knows he will stay that year.

II

It was late October, just after the first snowfall, when Joe went rabbit hunting. He took only his small rifle, and when, by noon, he had not returned, the boy set out to look for him.

He walked almost soundlessly on the frozen snow, calling occasionally to this father, until at last he heard the hound's low sorrow wail. When he found them, he thought that his father, lying face downward with his hair fallen forward and frozen into the snow, was dead. But turning

him over, he found that there was still life in him and lifted him.

The hound huddled close to him as he walked, blocking his steps, and the rifle he had slung on one shoulder knocked against him. As his father grew heavier, and the hound more pressing, he felt the impossibility of reaching home in time.

He stopped and pushed the dog away. 'Home. Go on home,' he said. But the dog only huddled closer. 'Home,' he yelled, his voice rising to a shriek that pierced through the heavy snowfall stillness, 'go home.' And he cracked a branch from a nearby bush and whipped the dog who whined and rolled on his back in the snow, until the frozen stick snapped. At last, when he had given up and was again straining to lift his father, the dog rose and moved slowly off in the direction of home.

The boy sat by his father and waited, listening to the story that told itself. The claw-rips on his face and the deep paw holes that had been near him in the snow were those of a bear. His father, thinking that all the bears were already in hibernation, must have come unexpectedly upon this one and, knowing it would do more harm than good to fire his small rifle, had turned to step behind a tree and been slapped in mid-turn. The bear, sated, hungry only for sleep, had gone on his way not bothering to maul his victim further.

The boy started up at the faint sound of the hound's baying. He cursed himself for believing that the dog, who had now found himself a rabbit to chase, would go straight home. Once more he shouldered the rifle and began to carry his father toward home.

The afternoon dwindled quickly and the boy, sweat freezing on his forehead, was forced to stop often, and his strength, everytime, returned as less than it had been.

When he was almost home, the hound, lanky-legged and grinning, galloped to him and plopped a still-bleeding rabbit at his feet. The boy did not kick it from him nor curse the dog, even to himself, but only continued on. And the dog, now, less than a mile from home, at last raced off and barked at the door until the boy's mother came out and saw her son, small and dark against the dusk-blurred whiteness. She lumbered out to meet him, crashing through the snow at every step, and together they brought Joe into the house.

Joe lay, grey and unmoving, for many weeks, but he lived. And the boy,

through the weeks when he thought his father was dying, went often to the edge of the cove that lay hidden beneath a layer of ice as thick as a man is tall. He stood there on the crusted snow that buried the old stump where he had sat during the summer and looked out over the snow-shifting emptiness of white that covered the lake, and thought that in the spring he would kill a bear, perhaps the bear that had struck his father although he would have no way of telling which it was. It was not resentment, not even quite revenge. Some great brown lumbering beast had slapped aside a man, half his size, who blocked his path; what was there to resent? The man had held a tool of metal and wood which was meant to make him equal to, supreme over, the bear; but it had not been a big enough tool, nor used quickly enough. There is no revenge to be taken after a fair fight: the boy felt this, knew this, believed this. But as he stood looking across the shifting snow desert of the lake, watching old familiar shapes take new form and linger a moment before being swept away, he thought of spring and the bear that he would kill.

And Joe, through all the weeks that he lay there nearly dead, was living, more vividly than he had ever lived his life, a dream. The same dream, over and over, until it was no longer a sequence, but an ever-present scene.

He saw himself as from a distance, standing, small and swaying with a great wind, on a snowfilled plain.

Then he was with himself and in himself and, suddenly, before him was a bear like none he had ever seen. A white bear, yellowed-white, with pink, slathering jaws and pointed teeth that clashed together as his head swayed from side to side. A bear twice the size of any he had ever seen, with a pointed snout and swift, smooth gait as it ran toward him. And white so that he had not seen it, in the snow, until it was upon him. They stood there for an instant, or forever, the bear with a paw drawn back to slap. Then he looked into the bear's eyes, which, it seemed to him, were colorless but deep, always they were deep. And he fell, before the bear slapped him, fell and it was empty; and he was lost while all around echoed far voices of a language he had never learned and always known and now would understand when he stopped falling; but, always, as he neared the bottom it started again, and once more he saw

himself as from a distance, standing, small and swaying with a great wind, upon a vast swept plain of snow.

When, at last, he awoke, it was full winter, and the cabin, with its windows now tar-papered against the cold, was lighted only by a fire and two weak-flamed kerosene lamps whose soot-shaded chimneys cast writhing figures dancing in slow cadence upon the blackened walls.

So Joe was still in his dream.

He seldom spoke, and when he did it was in a slurred garble that told only of a bear that he must learn to know.

All that winter he sat before the fire carving, whittling, bear figures with wide, gaping jaws and hollow eyes that reflected light and shadow from the fire until they took on life of their own, and it seemed that mingled with the woodsmoke was the heaviness of bear musk. His wife, and son, and the old man moved softly about him, although it was not necessary. Nothing disturbed him.

Each moved about softly, almost as deep in his own thoughts as was Joe in his dream.

The wife thought nothing but of keeping him alive–that he must eat, be warm, and left in peace. That was all she thought or knew and all she cared to know.

The boy wondered at the mystery of his father. At times he longed to be in that strange world with him, and at other times stifled an almost overwhelming urge to scream like a child and beat upon his father with his fist until the man should waken.

Often he sat staring into the fire, and with shadow-flicker as his thoughts, would find himself grow wiser, and would feel some stirring in himself that seemed to circle, searching for a place to bed.

And the old man thought: my son will die soon. For he knew that no man could live the way Joe was. No man can spend his time carving bears, he must hunt them. If he would know the bear he must conquer it. In the winter when he cannot hunt, he must clean his rifle and prepare for spring. He must tan the hides of last year's hunt: scrape them, smooth them, soften them, until they fit his use. He must hunt the bear to know it. That is what the old man thought. He thought, too, that when you kill a bear you look into his mouth or at his neck where your shot must land, but never into the eyes. For the eyes tell nothing, or too

much, and you do not fire in time. If you would live, you must hunt the body of the bear, not its soul. The old man knew that.

And often he sat and stared at the box of coins, soot-blackened now, but bright, playing the lamp light back and forth among themselves. He thought how he would like to hold one, rubbing it until it shone, silver-clean, and it was his fingers that were blackened. But still he did not touch them, and still the boy, watching him, thought: when I go I shall give him one, the finest one.

For there was no question, even then, that he would go, and not return.

III

In April, although the lake would lie ice-buried for over a month more, the snow had begun to melt during the day and ran water-free down the hills and dripped from bald, black branches until night came to freeze it into new patterns. Daylight was still not strong, but the sun rose, ballooning full at dawn, and sank more slowly, late in the evening.

Now, beneath the snow, earthforms were visible once more.

It was on a day like that that Joe, gaunt and pale as the end of winter itself, moved from before the fire and walked to the door. The hound, who had lain silently against him all winter, bounded outside and rolled in the snow, his gangly legs waving, while his bark, sharp and broken, cut through the woods.

The next morning when they awoke he was gone, and with him the hound and big rifle. The boy knew that his father had gone for a bear, and this time prepared himself for several days out before he went after him, for he felt that they would not return that night.

As he left the cabin, he found his grandfather at his side, and paused. 'I must travel quickly,' he said, but the old man shook his head and began walking beside him.

They went slowly, breaking through the snow crust where, earlier that morning, Joe had been able to walk quickly upon the surface. The spring air became a bitter joke as they slogged, all day, through water-snow that gulped, knee high, at their legs.

When they found Joe it was nearly night. They must have, the boy

thought, circled the round lake and come up across the inlet. For Joe, quite close below them, his rifle raised against the bear that lumbered toward him, seemed small and far away, standing on a reaching bleakness of white that rose, whirling, fountaining into the dusk, and resettling with the wind.

Through the snowmist, they saw the hound race away across the lake, as the bear charged Joe, who let go his rifle, and fell. As the boy ran down the slope and onto the frozen lake, his father's cry echoed all around him: lost. Falling. Lost.

He shot the bear with the small rifle cleanly in the front of the neck, so that, spurting redness, it barely staggered before it fell, letting the snow sop its blood.

When his grandfather reached him, they turned Joe over, and found him unmarked save for the old claw-rip scars that seemed to shrivel now in the cold, dead.

The boy picked up his father and carried him to the foot of the slope, then built a fire on the ice. Joe lay, it seemed, mahogany carven in the snow as night lowered itself onto the lake. And the boy, although he did not mean to, found himself staring at the man until his grandfather moved next to him, holding a still warm piece of flesh.

Together, they stood looking at the bear's dripping heart which lay in the old man's hand, wondering helplessly after the forgotten rites of some lost ceremony, while all about the moan of winter's passing wind was tribal voices in a mourned and ever mourning chant of death.

Poems | by Rosemary Tonks

FOG PEACOCKS

We were the city's young, and our veins
If they ran pale from the bad food
Even so they carried the infernos of its moods
For we were the children of the rotting peacock
Of a passer-by, seen in a mist of scorching bitumen.

Oh you bound homeward when the cloud
Of gold gas shone behind the house
With a captured insect, once half Helium
Now only spurs and gauze,
And the green liquor pool in jars of glass . . .

We were not less whose city like an alcohol
Spoke hotly to the artery, and we already
Knew love's streets–where at the fall
Of thermal, phosphorescent dusk
There is a drop that goes down sheer to Hell.

Those evenings you were mutinous
Against the tyranny of kitchen tables where
The flat iron cools its mirror of blue ore
And grip of hot rag
And the old blanket smokes like humus . . .

We were the young, derisive metropolitans
Soon to be mashed flat as a wet coalsack by skies
Of ochre, full of malice, coating the trees with emulsion,
And you would have to drag for our disgust in sewers
And break cobwebs reaching our illusions.

POET AND ICEBERG

No powerful and gloomy city
Which has rid itself of vermin
Will admit to keeping
One of these disreputable pets
With amorous limbs of milk
Fond of nocturnal strolls
And the immortal dirt of London
Under the clear panes of its nails.

Except the rogue is hunted off the street
And hissed, cities lie undefended
And weak from centuries of boredom
At the mercy of the pest
Who lives by thieving like all vermin
And will take a heart out of its chest
By force, and handle it
So gently that it's broken.

For brooding and embittered cities
Only slowly form their prejudice
Into an iceberg that is large enough
For ignorance to steer
From the bottom of a soul
By its rudder made of glass
Until the diamond smells blood and gores
The stranger in the ribs in self-defence.

THE SOLITARY'S BEDROOM

Now for the night, liquid or bristling!
When owls make the ink squeak at my window
And my bedroom that can bone my body of its will,
Drinks out my brains on pillows.
Like a bather caught and skinned by rollers
I shall toss for an eternity in surf,
When the air-eating spirit in my nostrils
Is maddened by its heavy coat of earth!

Now for your rest, eyes where my passions lay
Waterlogged in flashing muscles all day
Well below the waterline and plotted in their acids,
Salt mortice sets your lids:
Baked on Hell's rubbish heap I go on smouldering,

With my spirit at its bread of breath
Incapable of beating out the flames! And hatches
Are raised cautiously by all the senses . . .

O once you have taken this draught of black air
You would be glad of infinity to get your bearings.

On the Complex of Purism

by Kimon Lolos

We were talking language and the Athenian lady said: 'No,' she said, 'no children with my husband. When I want to be with child I will make it with a peasant who smells of sweat and horses or with a truck driver who reeks of benzine. My husband is of an old tired aristocratic family.'

Maybe it was just symbolic talk. But consider that *language* is feminine in Greek, French, Italian, and perhaps in many other tongues. Then think that, when it comes to fundamentals, women know by instinct from where to draw new blood. And you will understand why 'newspaperman' Lucian pushed aside obsolete Attic and used the Hellenistic Greek; why Dante wrote in Italian instead of Latin; why Twain, Mencken and William Carlos Williams preferred American English to English English; and why so many others chose the tongue that stings and sometimes stinks like a fresh scallion but it comes directly from the native land, with a beard too.

Languages, syntaxes, grammars, dictions, spellings become precious, anemic, narcissistic every so many centuries or decades; they lose their manliness or femininity, whichever, from too much self-consciousness. And it is always the common tongue, the colloquial, the vernacular, the Vulgate, the slang, the phonetic spelling–the street, the stable, the port, the railroad, the sea, the fields, the beard of the scallion that reclaim the tired language and transmute it into a new, living organ.

This has nothing to do with chauvinism, regionalism, country versus city, free love, Hollywood 'folklore' singing, native handicrafts and dances for tourists. It has to do with plain biological rebirth. And so you eat the scallion and sleep with the farmer's daughter, how else. You want to say *I fell asleep,* instead of *I surrendered myself into the arms of Morpheus.* You want to say *I sat down,* and not *I permitted the easy chair to invest my mortal frame.* You have had enough of preciosity and so you want to go again to the yeast of the language, and so straight to the yeast of things. It may be raw, and prudish stomachs won't digest it. It may involve rolling on the ground, and fastidious clothes can't take it.

But language, together with its grammar and its spelling, is like Antaeus: it rises stronger after touching earth. Whether the fall is the result or the cause of a change in esthetic attitude, it doesn't really matter. The rejuvenation is there in either case.

My French is not expanded enough to know whether the new themes in Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal* were also a language rejuvenated through contact with the earth. At any rate his thematic case can serve as an analogy to our linguistic argument: Gautier wrote that Baudelaire's bird was a dirty bird but then an esthetic bird and then a pure, spiritual bird; for it first went down, low, and touched mud and then, with one flap of its wing, got away and rose. I believe we can say exactly the same about the bird that feeds in the common language. *Whilst a man should, if possible, think like a great genius, he should talk the same language as everyone else,* said Schopenhauer. He said, *it is stupid people who like being demure and formal.*

But let me go back to the more or less symbolic Greek lady who refused to have children with an aristocratically hypotonic husband. Officially, the split between her language and his is some sixty or seventy years old. Unofficially, it is a four-hundred-year-old bloody war and still going strong.

Many metaphorical and some literal bloodsheds stained the transition from obsolete Greek, called the *puristic,* to the common language, called the *demotic.* The purists labeled the demoticists as *hairy, barbarians, Bulgarians, vulgarians, Slavs, Turks, illiterates, traitors, dirty Venizelists* (followers of Premier Venizelos), *democrats, communists, atheists, immoral, obscene, corrupters of youth, academic criminals, criminal academicians, foreign agents, agitators, pacifists.*

In the first three decades of the century the purists of Greece persecuted educators, teachers for stating that demotic Greek was a reality and was here to stay. Later, the purists smeared, pressured and haunted a university professor for having translated Plato's *Symposium* into a softened, mellowed puristic. And even later, they dragged a writer into court for having translated the New Testament into spoken Greek.

Nowadays there is not one Greek poet, novelist, short-story writer, playwright who uses the puristic as his vehicle. If he did, he would be a literary curio and a commercial failure; which shows that for critics and public the puristic is alien to modern Greek artistic expression. And so we would expect the war to end at this point. But it doesn't.

The fury of the purist foams in the open or ferments in the dark; bullies or conspires; ostracizes or dismisses in political, governmental, religious, professional, educational circles. At the university level the demotic is taboo, as a rule. Those of the professors who recognize the equal rights of the demotic are under academic suspicion or disfavor: they are banned or discriminated against in some way or other. Only a few years ago a professor at the Polytechnic School was refused publication of his speech on the celebration of the Greek Independence Day. The censor, a professor at the University of Athens, claimed that the piece *infected (sic)* the spirit of the National Holiday because it was written in the demotic.

Now I think we can say, roughly, that when the language of the people asserts itself, phonetic or simplified spelling also seeks recognition, and to some degree it succeeds–if they let it. The Greek purist, for one, won't let it, I know. He wants the obsolete, archaic spelling intact. He wants the dead body of historical orthography to stay in state forever. He insist on unnecessary double consonants. He also insists on the two 'breathings' and the three 'accents' over the vowels and the 'subscripts' under them, although they have no phonetic value; although the pronunciation of a syllable remains the same with or without the 'thin' breathing (᾽), the 'thick' breathing (῾), the 'acute' accent (΄), the 'grave' accent (`), the 'circumflex' accent (^) and the subscript (ˌ).

Twenty years ago Prof. Kakridis, who collaborated with Nikos Kazantzakis in the translation of the *Iliad,* pronounced the whole system of breathings and accents superfluous, pointless, time-wasting. He wrote his own texts without breathings; without accents on one-syllable

words and on polysyllabic words accented on the last syllable. For his 'rebellion' the purists of his university put him to academic trial, and he had to leave. Had Kazantzakis been a university professor, he too would have been forced to resign, I'm sure: Kazantzakis applied the Kakridis system of accentuation in his own writings.

Recently, J. Donald Adams and Horace Reynolds remarked or implied, on two different occasions in *The New York Times Book Review,* that reform in English spelling has been and will continue to be gradual. As a Greek, I consider the remark or the implication as a polite Anglo-Saxon understatement. And I only wish there will be a Greek G.B. Shaw to leave money for the purging of the sins of historical orthography on the other side of the Continent.

Meanwhile let us console ourselves with the fact that grammarians, linguists and writers who believe in simplified spelling are not rare animals: from, say, Benjamin Franklin to our present day orthographic humanists. Rudolf Flesch writes in the *Saturday Review: To a scientist, spelling is simply a nuisance, the relic of a prescientific age, something that will sooner or later go away.* And Porter G. Perrin writes in his *Writer's Guide* that accurate spelling is a social insistance rather than a fundamental linguistic requirement. Perrin's remark is more significant, perhaps, since it appears in a book that teaches accepted grammar and accepted spelling: it shows the scientist's refusal to ignore the bitter truth.

In my opinion, Perrin's social *conformity* coincides with Horace Reynolds's social *habit* in spelling in that both writers point at the emotional motives of purism. Whether against a language with its feet on the ground, or against simple grammar and spelling, the purist goes through life ruminating his debatable motto: What was good enough for my father, is good enough for me. As a rule he is for all three: dead language, obsolete grammar, antiquated spelling, all good for him and his father.

He is lying, of course, both about himself and his father. Down deep he knows, for instance, that artificial, false spelling had punished Father then as much as it tortures Son now. If he really is right about the 'goodness' of Father's Victorian spelling, then Great-great-grandfather was also right about the goodness of the Restoration spelling, of the Chaucerian spelling, . . . of the cuneiform Babylonian writing!

The purist's traumatic experience with cadaverous language, stilted

grammar, unrealistic spelling has turned him into a multiple pervert. He is a necrophile: he prefers to make love to a dead queen rather than to a living peasant girl. He is a masochist: he finds pleasure in grammatical and orthographic contortions. He is a sadist: he wants his children to learn their language in the same hard way he did although an easier and more sensible way has been discovered.

He also suffers from Praetorism and Mandarinism. Secretly, he hopes that lofty and labyrinthic language, intricate and impenetrable grammar and spelling will keep the layman out of the temple; just as the original Roman Praetors did not want the common citizen to know anything about the exact meaning of the law; just as the Mandarins did not want their high tongue to touch the low lips of the coolie.

We have a vested interest here (in the old spelling) said Horace Reynolds in his article. The *we* is not editorial. It is a melancholy plural. Mr. Reynolds hints at the potential puristic tendency in all humans. How true. The avant-garde spellers of today can easily become the conservatives of tomorrow–it has happened before, you know.

The Wife who Rode Horseback

by Goffredo Parise

They had been married just a few days when, one fine morning, Romana wanted her husband to carry her into the bathroom.

'Why? Aren't you well, don't you feel well, dear?'

'No, no, darling–it's only to feel closer to you. I can't explain, but it would mean so much to me.'

'All right then, ready!' Glauco exclaimed with a laugh and, catching his wife up in his arms, he carried her without any effort. Right after that Romana busied herself with her household duties, although it seemed to Glauco that his wife was moving slowly and listlessly. He noticed how the coffee pot fell from her hand, how a moment later she couldn't find the strength to unscrew the two parts and how, waiting

for the coffee to be made, she went back to the bedroom and stretched out on the still warm bed. She seemed not only taken by a strange languor but sulky, too, and unmistakably irritated.

Glauco examined his conscience rapidly, so rapidly that he mixed it up with the images and dreams of the night; he found nothing with which to reproach himself in his conduct towards Romana. He had sent her bunches of carnations. Physical love had come a little at a time and he had managed to bring about a thousand intimacies without brusque passages by just such tenderness and courtesy: from carnations to vintage wine, to liqueurs, to a bottle of champagne one rainy evening.

He looked at Romana stretched out on the bed. Her silk robe had slipped down from her body leaving her white leg uncovered to the tip of her small, nervous foot. She was flexing her toes with a quick move upward and then a jerk downward, as if articulated by an internal spasm; her whole leg, right up to the thigh, was pervaded with the spasm that came up from the toes of her twitching foot, and such a tic in Romana, whom Glauco knew as a calm, relaxed woman, seemed the sign of unusual nervousness. His eyes went over her noting the slow movement of her small, fleshy lips. First she pressed them together until the naturally rosy color left them, then she passed the tip of her tongue over them and nibbled at their corners, all the time keeping her eyes in a fixed stare–those deep-set brown animal eyes, always so quick and impatient, but now forsaken, as if stuck fast to a part of the wall, still and expressionless.

Wearily Romana got up from the bed. She sighed and returned to the kitchen.

The next day she asked to be carried again, and the following days, too. Glauco asked himself the reason for his wife's behavior. Why the listlessness, the languor that immediately overcame her when he let her down?

The fourth day Romana wanted to mount Glauco by herself; instead of settling in his arms, she got astride Glauco's back, keeping herself up by pressing her knees tightly to his sides and grasping his shoulders with her arms. Glauco laughed to split his sides at this absurdity that made Romana so gay, too. Still, he was taken by surprise at the vigor with which she clasped him: it was like a serpent's hold, or, even more, like being in the grip of a man's–a wrestler's–two thick muscular and

robust arms while they imprisoned him around the waist, squeezing his insides and taking away his breath a little.

He was relieved when she got down but an indefinable uneasiness came over him–so much so that he chose to dress in a hurry and go out. He began to suspect that Romana was sick or, more simply, that she wanted to avoid housework. With this system of hers Romana wanted, perhaps, to register a protest and the hint for him to hire her a maid. But considering it carefully, Glauco knew it was not so. Romana was completely dedicated to her home life and had herself often refused a maid, saying they soon become masters in a household.

And so? What kind of protest could be gleaned from that affectionate and despotic game, from those ever more frequent pouts, from that veil of resentment in her eyes when he made her, sighing, slide down from his back? It was useless to brood about it, Glauco told himself that she was still a child.

The days passed and Romana was eating less and less; in the morning she no longer had breakfast with Glauco, she stayed in bed half dozing, her foot jerking in spasms. But if Glauco carried her on his shoulders, as she always begged him so plaintively on first awakening, then her expression changed in a flash and her body, on her husband's shoulders, would quiver with impatience, happiness and energy. Yet when Glauco got tired and put her down gently into a chair or onto the bed again, she would turn pale on the spot and a kind of exhaustion would come over her like a paralysis. Her smile would disappear from her face, her glance slacken little by little until it lost all vivacity, animation, awareness, and her eyes would move dully like those of a sick person. In the end Romana would lie stretched out on the bed breathing with difficulty, her eyes motionless, and only her toes contorted and frenzied.

One morning Glauco woke up early: he had to leave on a short business trip out of town. Suddenly, still in her sleep, Romana clutched him, and with a gesture of impatience he tried to twist himself free from the arms around his neck. Still caught in the coils of sleep, he acted unthinkingly and brutishly. With a grunt he broke out of her slender, white arms and sprang from the bed letting Romana fall onto the rug. In the bathroom, Glauco splashed a great deal of wanter onto his face, rinsed his mouth, and then drank with long, greedy gulps.

Returning to the bedroom he found Romana still on the floor; she

was awake and trembling as if taken by a nervous disorder. She appeared to be in her right senses but her mouth was twisted into a grimace of disgust and hate. She lay there on the rug almost naked, her legs spread apart and her toes sunk into the pile as if to tear at it, and from there she began to insult him. She uttered vulgar and obscene dialectal words with the violent and shameless mastery of a woman of the people, of those who hang out in cheap taverns. And from time to time she laughed, with a sudden gasp that seemed to rise from her contracted abdomen and then to spread through her veins and muscles right up to her throat where the laugh became transformed into a stridulous howl soon smothered by another spasm from her abdomen. She went on like that for some time; finally she became still and closed her eyes. There was a moment of silence, then, taut as a serpent in the act of striking, she sprang at him and settled on his back. Glauco submitted for an instant to the grip of her arms and knees; then, with an effort that made the blood rush to his face, he sought to free himself: he couldn't do it. Romana's knees pressed into his sides with redoubled force and her heels struck at his stomach as if to incite him. He felt himself fainting, then Romana screwed in her knee and with a rapid blow to his middle shifted his fall so that Glauco went down on his face and she was still astride, riding him.

For a few days things went better. Romana began to eat again and to occupy herself half-heartedly with household matters. And then, after a week had passed, Romana began all over again to refuse food and anything that had to do with the apartment.

Returning from work Glauco would find her in bed: she read, dozed, sighed, wept. He decided that they should eat out; he thought that perhaps given a choice and saved the bother of fussing around pots and pans, Romana would eat something. But it was no use.

'You absolutely have to go to a doctor,' Glauco said.

'It's not necessary, it's just a form of nerves, you'll see, it will go away in time,' Romana assured him with a weak strained smile, like an invalid who already knows his destiny but forces himself not to reveal it to anyone.

One evening Romana rode Glauco again, spurring him with cruelty and viciousness. Glauco collected all his strength and hate blazed from his eyes as he seized Romana by her hair and banged her repeatedly on

the floor, storming blows onto her until Romana fled into the bedroom and locked the door. A little later they were in bed together.

'Why did you make me do it? It's never happened to me before with anyone–like a beast!' Glauco sobbed at her side.

Romana clasped him weeping and kissed him all over his face: 'I don't know, darling, I don't know what happens to me. Maybe it's jealousy–just the idea that you could want another woman . . .'

'But I don't want any other woman, you know that. I'm always here with you . . .'

'It's not true. You do want another woman, I know; don't lie.'

'But who is it? Who? Who do I want?'

'You know very well.'

Glauco felt despair overcome him and he clutched his wife by her arm. He drew her to him and said between clenched teeth, 'Who do I want?'

'That's enough. You know very well . . . go away and leave me in peace.'

'No, I'm not going away at all.'

'Go away . . . you're a liar, a hypocrite.'

Romana began to weep hysterically. Glauco turned out the light and gave himself up like a starved man to the deep, heavy sleep that instantly came over him. But he was awakened during the night overwhelmed by a strong pain at the temples. His heart beat in his throat and he seemed to be suffocating: it was Romana sleeping on top of him, holding him tight; her sleep was calm and serene, a light smile rippled over her puffy lips. Tenderly Glauco detached her and moved her back to her place.

The next morning Romana asked him to carry her to the bathroom. Glauco, who had slept deliciously all the remainder of the night and felt in the highest spirits, consented to his wife's wish. Romana stayed on her husband's back almost an hour and a half, but quietly, without squeezing him, without goading him or spurring him on to gallop. She prepared the coffee from his shoulders, then she had him accompany her around while she dusted the furniture and finally they chatted together awhile seated in an armchair, she still astride him.

The long period of fasting had dissipated the beauty and youthfulness of Romana's body. She had become very thin and pale, her small

sunken eyes were like those of a famished animal and, as with an animal whose malnutrition doesn't depend on him but on the fact that he can't find it or that it is denied to him, they were full of rancor and hate; her hair was unkempt and wirey, her tongue covered with little reddish furrows, the signs of her teeth almost visible under the taut livid skin of her lips; her breasts, once small, robust and pointed, were now flabby as stockings hung out to dry; her hands, once so lovely, were a tangle of constantly contorted bones as she flexed them continuously, lacing her fingers and worrying them in grips and spasmodic contractions.

By now Romana had acquired new techniques in riding Glauco and he, once clutched by her legs and held with her knees, absolutely could not free himself. With a hand that had become practiced, she would grab tufts of her husband's hair and pull it almost out. Then she would spur him with the drawing pins she had applied inside her shoes around the heel. Glauco could not bear it for long and often he fainted. Romana streamed sweat; right afterwards she felt starved and while her husband lay on the bed she would hurriedly prepare food which she bolted down avidly.

Glauco tried to make himself understood: 'Let's try to reason this out. Right after you've been on me you're hungry, you can eat?'

'Yes, then I'm all right, I feel as if I've been reborn because I feel that you are not thinking of freeing yourself from me, all my jealousy towards the other woman leaves me; in fact, I'm no longer jealous.'

'But you have no reason to be, there is no other woman! Try to reason . . .'

Glauco insisted on having the facts, the proof that he was betraying her; but in those moments Romana preferred to keep quiet or change the conversation, smiling with that false smile of hers, full of hate. Glauco, too, preferred to change the conversation whenever that look showed up in her eyes.

Since it was the only way to get his wife to eat, to have her happy and working about the place, Glauco cut down a great deal on his sales trips in order to comply with her wish to ride him. When this happened and when, moreover, the proposal to ride actually came from him, Romana would get up onto his shoulders quietly, without pulling his hair and without spurring him with the drawing pins; then she rode him lightly and without any frenzy, at a walk or once in a while at a trot, but never

at a gallop unless it was he who suggested it. Glauco sometimes did it to please her and to wind up in one great spurt those exercises he now undertook for her health's sake.

At the beginning of summer Romana bought some stirrups which she herself fitted to her husband. More than actual stirrups, they were a kind of leg support that looked like some orthopedic apparatus–a large leather girdle that circled Glauco's waist and from which emerged, at the sides, over his hips, two crescents in steel chrome like those on obstetrical tables. In this way Romana had thought to alleviate the knee exertions that made her sweat so and at the same time to let Glauco feel her nearer to his body–which was what she wanted and was as it should be. Sometimes they drove out to the country in the car, early in the morning or right after sundown, and in this way Romana had a chance to go through her exercises in open spaces with fresh air around her.

In a few months she was completely herself again. She laughed happily once more, her whole body relaxed from that initial spasm, her features took on color and flesh, her eyes reacquired that soft, velvety patina shaded by long eyelashes of a tame, serene animal. Laughing and chattering upon her husband's shoulders, she prepared excellent little dinners, the apartment shone.

Glauco became a bit hunchbacked. But he no longer hated Romana with the passion of liberty, as at first. On certain occasions, yes, but no longer for the inner necessity of a man who is not a slave, but rather because he wasn't feeling well, he was sleepy, he was tired or hungry, or he wanted to read the paper. But he was stopped right off even in this purely physical protest by the stronger hate that spouted out of his wife's eyes, eyes that turned small and sharp as a serpent's. It was an expression that he knew well enough. Then, even while hating her with the whole of a body that begged for freedom, he would run to get the orthopedic girdle, he would lace it on and propose to Romana that they 'take a spin'. He had no strength to resist the clutches of her fingers in his hair, nor to bear the pain of the drawing pins.

Only at night, when Romana slept, smiling in her equestrienne dreams, would Glauco think what he wanted and give himself over to a silent, meditated hate and to absurd projects of revenge and redemption. He watched the glimmer in the darkness of the two steel crescents that projected out of the thick leather girdle, he cursed them for an

hour, two hours, three hours; or he would stare intensely at his wife immersed in sleep and many times he would find himself trying to see if, by chance, he had the powers of witchcraft, of a wonder-worker, not so much to effect a cure for her but rather to make her die on the spot, there, in a flash. He stared at her intensely, with his eyes straining and his tongue out, without resolving anything. And yet even he had a nocturnal life, free and masterless. At times he dreamed of vast meadows of heather, like those of his childhood vacations, long and open to the hill-free horizon, and he dreamed of galloping free until sundown and then at dawn until the next night, towards other fields, other countries, another conjugal love. But he would awake with a start, the veins in his neck turgid with blood and his breath cut off by the weight of Romana's body lying over him.

Or he would have other moments of freedom during his work, which he got done in a hurry to return to her, or when he was alone in the apartment in the few hours that Romana dedicated to shopping. Then he read the newspaper or a book, wrote post-cards, listened to the radio, smoked. But they were few hours, sometimes only minutes–all at once he would hear the door open and there would be Romana's step in the hall. There, she was arriving; Glauco wouldn't know where to fix his eyes, he would move them frantically and fearfully like an animal in a trap trying to find a place as quickly as possible where he could rest them in that moment in order not to betray his previous short freedom. Then, rather than pass through those anxious moments that entered like sharp pangs into his heart, Glauco preferred a thousand times, yes, unashamedly a thousand times, to run into the bedroom. She was there, she was about to reach him, in an instant she would have opened the door, she would have flung herself onto him with her fingers ready to pull his hair. Rapidly, trembling, Glauco put on the leather harness, he adjusted it, he calmed himself, he raised his head as if tossing an imaginary mane, and he laughed: there, he was ready.

Translated by Helen Barolini.

THREE GYPSIES

I have followed this man as his arched track goes
by all dovecotes, along all coasts,
yet nothing remains, no trail
but dust in light and the mad cockcrow.

And the second . . . was he old? trader in ages and doubles?
Sleek and dusky as a barn-owl,
an old man waking to new miseries,
fair and foul, fowl and fare.
Someone who perhaps passed by
dragging the road, or selling rain.

A moribund sameness. Toothache reality.
Three arch travelers in a mustard-coloured twilight
clattering full of bones and the world.
A dull inventory. Someone's met them, perhaps
a kind of king-who knows?
Too late now–dark begets dark.
Go tune your canary and keep a smile.

THE END OF SOMETHING

Something odd, changed, crazed in you
sent us to tears and borders:
legends and miracles . . .
a giant with a hundred hungry daughters . . .
the beast in the bullrushes.

And whether the ghost raised cain
in the bulging fields, or fought,
or busted women kneeling teated at the altars,
it was all changed and changed.
O order, age, and the nights
fierce with slaughter!

You, King, might have campaigned
across barley and willowbrake,
but were confounded . . .

So it came to this, changed and changed,
old women weeping in the fields
and the days and eves grown colder . . .

something like ash in the air,
the burnt oak black,
the chessmen churned and broken.

The Year of the Lily-blight

by Max Steele

Few people in the town, in fact no one except Mr. Jessie Hugh, who is actively engaged in the growing of lilies, has even considered, except momentarily at Easter time, and then only because of the increase in price, that there is a blight killing off the lilies.

Other things are happening in Weal, N.C. (pop. 27,600) which are commanding the attentions of the townsfolk.

The Weal Commonwealth (circulation 12,000) reported the second day of January that a dead baby had been found in a Tumble-Dry unit at the Wash Palace. For three days there were various speculations during coffee breaks. In the Thrall building, the only skyscraper in the city, the consensus at the soda fountain was that a mother and father had arrived home from a New Year's celebration and had accidentally gathered up the baby with the blankets. Since there was evidence that the blankets had not been washed, this theory was gradually abandoned.

When the identity of the year-old baby was finally learned, the fact seemed less likely than the speculation. A divorcee, visiting her hus-

band's relatives during the holidays, and staying in Bide Time Tourist Court, had, almost asleep, instructed her five-year old daughter to take the crying baby out and if he were wet to dry him. When it was proved by the coroner that the five-year old girl could not, even by standing on one of the metal chairs in the Wash Palace, reach the coin slot to deposit a dime in the Tumble-Dry unit, the newspaper printed the fact under the headline 'FOUL PLAY AT WORK'. However, after being questioned regularly by trained personnel, the little girl persisted in her statement which was accepted as a conclusion: 'A tall man put the money in for me.' Who the tall stranger was, no one could discover. After a time, interest in the identity of the stranger was lost.

Soon after Groundhog's Day, 'Daddy' Dan Fricks, who in any other town would have been known by his beard, dark glasses, and like by his vocabulary, man, as a 'beatnik', got hung up on the word 'yonder'. For close on to two weeks in February he repeated the word aloud, to himself or to anyone who cared to listen, a few friends at first, but later a sizeable crowd for a bar the size of Marino's, 16,000 times a day without stopping. Buddy Groves who in summer acted as life-guard at Beetle Beach counted with the automatic counter which he had stolen from the gate boy.

Sarah Osgrove who was 25 and the last unmarried girl in her crowd was out the first morning of March at dawn. She sat in the porch swing and announced to her mother that she was just going to sit there until something happened in that town. Even though she went out punctually every morning at seven and sat there all day except at meal time, nothing happened during the entire month of March. So April 1st she announced that she had every intention of doing the same thing the month of April. And she did. May and June too.

'Nobody tells me what to eat,' said Nick Antonio. And he sat down on the 4th of July and ate an entire barbecued pig. Much to no one's surprise, Nick Antonio was dead by midnight from a cerebral hemorrhage, though no one could profess to see anything cerebral about his concourse with the pig. Only one person even remarked that he had failed to swallow the smile from the pig's face, for there in truth it was, stretched tight on the face of the corpse. It made one wonder who had eaten whom.

Of passing interest at the Weal Charity Hospital during the August

dogdays was the case of Muriel Robinson, aged 18, who had become so terrified of her shadow that she had to be blindfolded while being transported from one dark room to another. The shadow, she claimed, was not her own.

'I feel faint,' said Mrs. Nannie Snow in the backseat of the automobile driven by her grandson.

'Miss Nannie', as she was called, was 94 that September and subject to car sickness. But she still insisted each Sunday on being driven througg Weal and down the White Horse Road.

'Shall I stop, Miss Nannie?' her grandson called back.

'Just as you please,' she more or less croaked. 'I just feel faint.'

When the car was finally eased onto the grassy shoulder, Oscar Snow jumped out from behind the wheel and helped the old lady out.

She stood, steadied herself on the door, then toddled forward across the field. After five or six steps she turned in baby-fashion and looked back, as though for applause. Reassuring herself that she had their full attention, she stumbled on, only occasionally using her cane.

It being a warm day for September, her grandson and his wife strolled along at a respectful distance behind her.

At a small cedar tree in the center of the field she stopped.

When the younger couple reached her she was saying to the tree: 'Young man, I asked you: whose field is this and if you can't tell me that maybe you can tell me did it by any chance once belong to a family name of Locum or Locust or something like that. No. Benjamin Locum. That's the name.'

After that, the Snows referred to that Sunday as the day Miss Nannie talked to a Tree. But not within her hearing.

Perhaps in not unrelated fashion: at the Weal City Park Zoo, at the beginning of October, there were, by Zoo records, six captive vultures. The month was almost over before Kenny Keith, an Attendant (for such was the word on the buzzard keeper's cap), reported that there were only five birds, with, he also reported, 'knowing sort of looks'. He was not fired and he was not asked to resign his post; but as he said, he knew which way the wind was blowing, and it was agreed that with his experience he certainly should know. Later he appeared with the same regularity at his new work as a janitor at the jail where, by coincidence, at the beginning of that month, there were five inmates.

Along the ridge of Bellow Mountain, beginning that fall, two men patrolled the old Peau Rouge trail, one from north south, the other from south north, one from eight to two, the other from two to eight and each with a Geiger counter. When asked 'Wherefore?' by hunters, boyscouts, lovers and hog-herders, they answered: 'Prospecting.'

The truth was they were Security men from an unpublicized atomic plant on the other side of the mountain. Usually, at least at this early, red stage of the autumn, the dry chirp of the crickets was louder than the metallic click of their gadgets.

The Sunday after Thanksgiving, Dr. Elmo Fier, vegetarian, segregationalist, white, married, protestant, suburban, owner of a station-wagon, a barbecue grill, four Van Gogh reproductions, a kidney-shaped coffee table, two form-fitting plastic chairs–in short a progressive man, with greying temples, balding pate, varicose veins, a paunch, and pains indicative of duodenal ulcers, ended a stirring speech to a joint meeting of the Young Business Men's Club and the Auxillary Lady Voters with the admonishment to consider the lilies of the field, how they toiled not and wanted not. Since it was neither a speech nor a sermon, no one knew exactly what to do, but the majority applauded not.

But as has been said, only Mr. Jessie Hugh who was actively engaged in the growing of lilies was aware of the lily-blight and from Thanksgiving on he began spending as much time on his knees in his bedroom, praying, as in the same position in his greenhouse, pruning.

As for the rest of the town: the clerks and typists in the Thrall building (16 stories) are talking during their coffee breaks of the newest murders; Muriel Robinson is confined to a permanent dark room where there is no likelihood of her seeing her shadow; Daddy Fricks continues, with the aid now of marijuana and more, to be seized by spells of 'yonder'; Sara Osgrove, still unmarried, sits on the porch swing waiting for something to happen; the widow of Nick Antonio puts flowers on his grave every Sunday and during the week refuses pork; Miss Nannie Snow has found a tree in her own yard to which she talks secretly about a secret past; Kenny Keith, the buzzard-keeper, is unduly alarmed when he counts by mistake four instead of five men in his charge; and on the ridge of Bellow mountain, the two Security men walk with their Geiger counters clicking–more audibly now that the crickets are silent.

NO WIND HAD BEEN

No wind had been in young sun days;
No need of wind. The land alone
Had sent its surge to ring and pound
Along these veins. The fishes' tap
And knock had sung and sounded through
This blood. And grain pressed hands against
This growing tree.

No wind again in days of rain;
No need of wind. The mind alone
Could conjure breath of summers gone,
Could bring again the roaring days
When lions on the hill or stalks
Of flax would bubble up the sap
Along these limbs.

But wind had come in days of leaves;
A need for wind–to stir those gentle
Dead, to brush a heated sigh
Along our loins, to raise us up
Like Giants with golden thighs above
The Sun. To lock our hair together
In the wood.

But no wind is in old sun days;
Yet need of wind. The foxes' joy
And goat-decked hill make little stir
Along this vein. The grain grows well
But does not feed. Yet I have breath
To mount and ride the loins of hills,
And seed the fields.

THE FLAX LONG RIPE

The flax, long ripe, was pulled that day.
Strong hands had torn it from the earth

To lie in rows beneath the sun.
The tea and scones had come at four
To let the men lie down among
The flax.

The wheat, not ripe, three fields away
Was growing strong and thistle free.
It gave a rattle, low and strange,
When breezes blew across the lough
And Sean came with a moan straight through
The wheat.

Mother's dead, he said that day.
And so they went away to lay
Her old bones down beside the church;
And when the banshees came to scream
The sons said go and pray, for our old
Mother's dead.

The flax, then warm, was put to rot
In water holes down by the heath
And then raised up to lie and dry
Beneath the sun until the smell
Of death had gone and they made linen from
The flax.

POEM FOR SOMEONE ELSE

Remember now the quick high nights
Of fields? The hum and pound of flesh
On fevered flesh when we would ride
The whole moon through and fear to fall
Apart?

Our room, half filled with demons then;
Who came from caves and trees to leer

Away a love. For comfort and for
Strength, I'd tell a tale or two.
Or three.

And we would rise before the night
Had gone, to go our separate ways.
To break with easy steps the bond
That just before seemed fused between
Our thighs.

And that the only sin, my love.
Whose echo breathes our names against
Another's ear. Whose curse is but
A thought, 'Where is he now? What does
She do?'

A SENTIMENTAL POEM

There are loves that have to sing,
I suppose, about great sweeping winds
Or the way God chose to bless the two.
The kind of thing where other times
And places have to be called in
To bear a sort of witness-even proof-
To what's already known. Well it's
All right I guess. Lord knows I've done
That sort of thing with you. And chances
Are I might go far enough some time
To let some other ears besides
Our own listen-through an image-
To our secret sighs. But now
Since I'm just sitting in a young
Man kind of way, it strikes me that
You love so many things apart
From me-like rocking chairs and old
Ballet shoes that keep some pictures

Company in a drawer. Or snow.
Or even other people's care.
And sitting here alone like this
I find that that's enough. I
Could know you've danced alone on grass
And loved its pressure back against
Your feet; or hear you've hugged a tree.
And that would be enough somehow.
You wouldn't have to tell me every
Day, or twice a day, how all
Was fine between us. You wouldn't
Even have to know I guess.
And every now and then, when
You felt sad that chairs or grass
Would not love back, I'd like
To take your hand, And tell
You things I'm saving even now.

François Yattend

by Jean-Claude van Itallie

'Who am I here?' François Yattend often asked himself. Sometimes he asked with a deep concern but usually it was from habit; he liked the sound of the words.

He had a hotel room in Paris. 'The Hotel Adelphi,' he wrote on a postal card to his mother, 'is near the Bois de Boulogne. My room has two large windows on the street.' He didn't write this only to impress her; he liked the windows. Not that he enjoyed sunshine–he didn't–but he liked being near the rhythm of things without himself being seen. The noise of the cars was a comfort to him. If there were an accident he might witness it and be asked to court to testify; he was in order with

the police. With his *carte de residence* there was nothing to fear, and he admired the fierce gendarmes who made their business of everyone else's. Once a blonde girl with short-cropped hair–she might have been an American–had looked up for nearly a whole minute toward François's windows. He had watched her from his usual place behind the curtain. Whenever he thought of her it made him content all over again to have windows on the street. Why, simply on a whim she might have come up and knocked on his door, perhaps she was lonely too and she would tell about herself and cry; she would come live with him in his room. The room was large, one of the best in the cheap hotel, with worn crimson furniture placed just so, replaced just so even if François decided to move anything himself (he didn't do that anymore because it was no use). The worst thing there, or one of the three worst things, was the cold from which François suffered more than a Parisian because he came from the south, from Tarascon.

In Tarascon he had achieved some small fame for receiving, upon graduation, the lycée's 'premier prix de mathématiques' as well as the 'premier prix des sciences pratiques' and the 'prix de biologie'. He used the prizes to convince his parents to allow him to leave for Paris to make his fortune. No one in the family would ever get anywhere, he grumbled daily, if even he, François, who had won the 'premier prix', were to remain working in the enameling factory like all the rest of them. He had two sisters and three brothers–'Like Napoleon', he had once remarked to his mother–and all of them worked at the enameling factory. His insistence on leaving was based on inner certainty that his parents wouldn't listen; it became merely a habit for him to urge them. And then, as François played in his mind with teary farewells and a triumphal return, each equally unreal, his mother came over to his side. The old priest, half out of his senses and inordinately proud of François, argued with François's father for him. When Monsieur Yattend finally had a rage and cursed out his consent it was too late for François to back down if he wanted to.

Until his money ran out he looked for work only half-heartedly, spending his time walking about Paris. Then for two weeks he was substitute ticket-puncher in the metro. That was about the time he grew his moustache; it made him look much older, about thirty he thought. Finally he got a job as a clerk in the accounting department of Ivoire

Laboratories, pharmaceutical manufacturers. Sitting at a high desk he calculated columns of figures. As soon as he finished one batch he had it stamped by the assistant manager and received another one; usually he did about six per day with the aid of a small calculator next to his desk. He was allowed three quarters of an hour for lunch, and he ate always at the Cafe du Sud. The waiter knew him there, smiled when he arrived and automatically served him his usual menu, steak and fried potatoes with some red wine, unless François asked for coffee which was rarely. After he had come there two weeks the waiter offered him a weekly rate, sometimes charging extra for the coffee and sometimes not. On the second day at work he had asked a timid-looking laboratory worker to accompany him, but the man had just shaken his head and scurried off.

The second worst thing about the hotel room was the bed which was bumpy and valleyed and had a pillow arrangement François didn't like. Instead of a real pillow which one could beat or cry into (François never cried) it was a hard sausage-like thing sewn on to the mattress. Going to bed was an added, and an acute, discomfort.

The third worst thing was the impossibility of taking a bath in the hotel. At home what he had enjoyed the most was sitting in the metal tub; he bathed luxuriously, first sitting quietly, soaping himself gently, and then rinsing with a soft sponge. The heating of the water, which took him an hour in the kitchen, was a work of love. And now in Paris he couldn't afford a room with a bath.

So his first Sundays were spent in search of a bathhouse. He was not content with the public one hear the hotel, the one with a dingy sign: 'Bains Municipaux', but indeed explored several areas of the city before finding one to his liking. It was tile a outside too, with large blue lilies and half-naked mermaids beckoning. In the damp courtyard, just inside from the shaded street, was a tiny fountain spurting courageously and around it an unplanted garden with not even weeds growing. Indoors was a ticket-office like a railroad station's and a tacked price list which François studied closely. He would have liked a massage but felt it was above his income and station. The woman behind the counter, who had first smiled encouragingly but now ignored him, would undoubtedly disapprove such a request. But he finally asked for a bath and the woman, again all a smile, pushed a bell-button which produced a serious little

girl to conduct him to a whitewashed cell where there was a clean bath, a fat cake of soap, and a large white towel.

François came here now every Sunday, like church (he hadn't actually been to Mass since leaving Tarascon, and he felt guilty about it). It was the culmination of his week. And it was here, on a certain Sunday, that he made a discovery. It was before stepping into the tub, at the very most voluptuous moment before letting his foot slip into the water when already practically comatosed in anticipation of the water's maternal warmth, that he saw when he looked down a red sore on both feet. He had not noticed his shoes rubbing. He found, on looking closer and getting a little away from the steam from the bath, that there were two small red dots on the back of his hands as well. Strange, he thought as he sat on a chair, that it should be he, François Yattend out of all the people who frequent the bathhouse (he hadn't actually seen any other clients), out of all the people in Paris, out of all his large family, out of all others it should be he who was so marked. 'Who am I here?': the phrase was now more revelation than question. For he knew immediately what the marks were: the stigmata. This unexpected communique from God was disturbing. He looked down again to make sure he wasn't mistaken, but no, right there, too precisely marked to be anything else were the marks of the suffering of Our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross where He died so that other men might live. François made a slow sign of the cross.

There was nothing else. No vision appeared although the walls of the cell seemed propitious for it, white and clean as a movie screen. He got dressed without having taken his bath–that would be undignified now–and modestly avoided looking at the spots.

He left quite sure that he would never return to the bathhouse. He felt that either it, or his coming here, was the indirect cause of his marks. Nothing else in his life would merit the heavenly attention unless of course he had always been destined for it. He was not so much surprised (François never got excited) as uneasy. He smiled a small smile of relief, feeling somehow he had finally come into his own, that his period of waiting was up. Once outside, however, he merely retained solemnity.

He followed his usual post-bath route to the Tuileries and there walked slowly through the park with its brightly colored formal flower

beds, repeating again and again, making a game of it: 'Who am I here? Who am I here? Who am I here?' Keeping his hands behind his back he accentuated the 'I', giving the phrase a forced rhythm. He tried smiling at a small boy jumping rope. The child stuck its tongue out and ran away. François was pleased with the sun this once; he did not suffer from the contrast of the seclusion of the bathhouse to the expanses of the public park. He walked around and around the pond, 'Who am *I* here?, Who am *I* here?', carefully placing one foot in front of the next. Here was an event imposed on him, perhaps an opportunity or perhaps a duty, in any case it could not be ignored.

The children around the pond were so occupied with launching and greeting again their toy boats that no one at all noticed François's sudden strange action. He stopped pacing, stared at the high ejaculation of the fountain in the center, and stepped into the pond.

The cold water was like one of his mother's unexpected slaps on the face. He took his foot out quickly and went gingerly to one of the metal chairs. He had not been completely certain he would be able to walk on the water but hazily he had considered it possible. He took off his wet shoe and sock and saw that the red spot had washed away. The cold water drops, tiny blinding reflectors, got on his hands as well, and the spots there too had disappeared.

No one noticed the small moustached boy, shoulders slightly hunched, walking away from the park, eyes down, muttering to himself, nor did they see his limp caused by the inconvenience of a wet trouser leg. He left behind him a trail of water that the violent sun soon evaporated from the pavement.

Alluding to Autumn

by Tu Fu

1 Jade dews chisel and wound the maple forests. Sombre
Is the air in the Wizard Mountains and through the Wizard Gorge.

River waves swell up to grasp the heavens. Storm clouds,
Uniting with the earth, darken above the Pass.
Chrysanthemums bloom again with last year's tears.
I billet my heart on a lone boat, returning me
To my old woods. Everywhere scissors and rulers are urged
To make winter clothes. In high White Emperor City
Laundry-stones are pounded rapidly in the twilight.

2 The slanting sun sets on Kuei-fu, the lonely city.
I lean towards the Dipper, my gaze on the Capital. I weep,
Hearing the gibbons' three cries. Vainly I follow the raft
Of August, serving my legateship. Now I recline
On my pillow, far from the censers in the Court
Decorated with portraits. Sad bugle calls are blurred
Behind the mountain tower's white-powdered parapets.
Look! the moon, rising above the ivied cliff
In front of the island, is shining on flowering reeds.

3 A thousand homes in the hilly outskirts lie cool
In the dawn's light. I daily sit in azure mist
In the river tower. Fishermen who spend the night
At sea are drifting, drifting still. In limpid autumn
Swallows are hovering, hovering yet. Kuang Heng submitted
Memorials to the Throne–my honors are eclipsed.
Liu Hsiang transmitted the classics–my intention is balked.
Many fellow-students, when young, were not ignoble;
Light-robed, they rode stout steeds near the Five Mausoleums.

4 I have heard that Chang-an resembles a chessboard. The sorrows
Of a hundred years of the world's games I cannot bear.
Mansions of prince or duke have new masters. The garb
And caps of officials, civil and military, differ
From those of old. Straight north, beyond the mountain passes,
Our gongs and drums spread terror. Our horse and chariots
Attack the west; but despatches, though feathered, are delayed.
In the cold rivers of autumn, fish-dragons lie still.
In my daily round, I think of the ancient Capital.

5 The Blessed-Island Palace faces the Southern Mountain.
Gathering dew, the golden pillars reach the heavens.
In the west, the Queen Mother descended onto the Pond
Of Jasper; the Purple Aura, coming from the east,
Filled the All-Embracing Pass. Pheasant-tail fans,
Moving like clouds, were unfurled in the Court. Above
The dragon scales round the sun appeared the imperial face.
I lie by the Hermit's River, dreading my year's evening.
How often, through green-ringed doors, will my audience be
summoned?

6 From Eye's Dread Gorge's mouth to the Winding River's bank,
Ten thousand miles of wind and smoke into pale autumn
Are fused. The Imperial Breath between the Calyx Tower
And the Walled Corridor often passes. The border war's
Sorrows enter the little Hibiscus Garden. Curtains
Of pearl and brocaded columns are circled by yellow cranes.
White gulls rise from embroidered ropes and ivory masts.
With pity I turn my head to the land of dancing and song:
Since times of old, Chin has been capital to Kings.

7 The Lake of the Brightened Scions and the navy on it
Were the work of Han. The militant Emperor's banners
Seem in sight. The Spinning Maid at her silk-loom wastes
A moonlit night. The Stone Whale's scaly armour stirs
Autumnal wind. Wild rice, wave-drifted, darkens and sinks
Like the clouds. Dew-chilled lotus blossoms drop,
Pink and crimson. The pass, reaching to the sky,
Is road only for the birds. Among rivers and lakes
Overspreading the land–a lone fisherman.

8 Meridian Park by the Royal Lodge River is vast
And meandering. The shadow of Purple Pavilion Peak
Falls upon Ripple Lake. Parrots peck the remnants
Of fragrant rice. On branches of emerald dryandra
The phoenix perches till old. Fair ladies gather feathers
For mutual spring gifts. Aboard a single boat
Hermits move into evening. Oh I, with a brush

Dipped in color, have meddled with imperial splendors:
I chant and gaze now, but droop my white head in rue.

Translated from the Chinese by Chao Tse-chiang.

Notes on Barcelona

by Richard Chase

It rained for two months. The rain came down on the houses, on the port, and on the Catalan citizens. The rain had no force in it–it became as passive as the downturned faces of the walkers in the broad streets.

The workman's hostel was sterile and well-run. We slept in small cubicle rooms. By three in the morning heavy feet began to tread the stairs–truck-drivers off to Madrid or Milan or Toulon. They were a pleasant lot of companions–but they seldom spoke.

In the morning I took the tube to the University. I ate oysters and drank wine or brandy in the bodegas. It continued raining.

It continued raining because Spain is without rain. It is a country of would be gentlemen, soldiers, and priests. And 'the others . . .' It is a country of arid uplands and of space, where rain is like manna in the desert. But they are not the chosen–these Iberian Latins and oval-eyed Moroccans . . . They even employ a company to bring down artificial rain from those dark storm clouds that rarely flatten out under the wind. The wind brings them in from the South. They only know one country.

The 'man in question'–names also having quality–was Dr. Edoardo X. First I called him Napoleon the Fourth; then Don Juan. He walked high with his arm in his jacket. The names were inappropriate. He lectured on 'Spanish History, Traditions and Civilisation in relation to the New and Old Worlds and the Future'. His lectures were for foreigners. His classroom was Room 14 on the second floor. (He was bald and the fringe on the perimeter of that tableland was like forest scrub after fire:

blackened and cindered . . . 'Mary Lou'–his wife–stood four foot nine without her shoes. She wore a leather coat.)

They also had one child called Juan. He was a fat boy without sense of humour. His parents pretended to like him (and, contrariwise, the child imbibed their latent dislike with notable pleasure). 'Here we can say what we like,' said Napoleon, or Don Juan. As you will. He waited for reaction from those of the Left-wing present: a publisher, a teacher, a journalist. My friend don Michele D. remained silent.

Juan refused to go to bed. (Exit Juan with maid.)

This was my first intimate party with Dr. Edoardo and his spouse. She was ill at ease. 'I am not a housewife,' she would say with subtle pride. It was evident: the chairs were lined against the wall as in a reformatory; the house smelt of dampness and of must; and the maid nagged at Dr. Edoardo about instructions for dinner. The only books in the bookshelves were teaching manuals; and a complete set of Dickens. I tried to name them within that hierarchy: Micawber and Mrs. Micawber, *Bleak House,* or a couple in *Barnaby Rudge* whose names I could not then remember . . .)

'All the Spanish are sad,' said another.

It is true: the Spanish are proud about their sadness. They like generalisations: and it continued raining much to their surprise.

'We are a country without rain,' said Dr. Edoardo academically.

Difference was inevitable after the cocktail party. I drank too much and talked. 'They will watch your every movement,' said don Michele, who had known me in Italy. 'Do be careful . . .' I locked myself in the lavatory and tried to detect the observant eye through the key-hole. I began to see Michele's point . . .)

I wrote a diary and a story about Rome in the bed in the cubicle. (The hostel maid sang all the day through . . .) The driver 'next door' went to bed at nine. I typed until midnight. He complained to the manager.

'You must also be on time', said Napoleon as he ostriched across the University quadrangle. He stood there looking down at his watch. 'Punctuality . . .' His smile was paternal. ('You must think of it as a paternal regime', he said to me at our first interview).

Thereafter I only typed in the early morning. I arrived 'on the hour'.

Oysters became a habitual diet; or rice fried in sour oil. Catalan food is not appetising. Oysters cost little in Barcelona. After lessons I went down to the 'puerto' and sat in a bodega. Here was the other city: no need to describe it. All ports are the same (as the Spanish would wish them to be in theory. They have the stamp of the 'universal' upon them in embryo. Tarts. Oysters. Sailors–mainly American and French. Bars. At night policemen and lighted doorways at which stand the night-walkers of Sleep Town. But the streets stink of urine in the gutters. There is also much music. 'Varicose veins and hernia . . .' (Advertisement.) The brothels have been closed but everyone knows where to go. The gendarmes in their stiff collars walk in twos and threes. Priests walk singly. Barcelona has been called the 'Little New York' . . . There is a nostalgia in these Catalans–a nostalgia for movement and for home, for expansion into something larger . . .).

The older men at the café tables look like Pablo Picasso. Weasel eyes in shrunken faces.

'You will find Spanish literature much like English literature,' said Dr. Edoardo, alias Napoleon. He took my arm. 'There has never been order in Spain. That is why *he* is so remarkable . . .' I had arrived at the University punctually on time: my daily work on the story had been cut down by half. I seldom saw 'alias' after the first weeks. He was always in a hurry: going somewhere or rushing to a lecture, or looking over the heads of students at the University walls. His clothes hung.

The painters and the writers were another world apart. They shrugged their shoulders at Press censorship. They resisted passively. Europe was beyond the mountain range 'over there . . .'
It was when the light cleared over Llobregat that distance returned. (Eugenio Montale has written a short poem with that title). Lying in bed in the cubicle I could see the furnaces of a steel and iron foundry: the red light pinkened out into the darkness and warmed the walls of the room. The sounds of the foundry became my companions.

The hostel also cooked excellent entrecote. It was worth saving up to eat steak and fried potatoes. On feastdays the friends of the manager danced in the main dining room. Everyone wore dark suits of extraordinary competence in tailoring and cut. The manager had accepted my residence as a 'fact'. But he was on their side too.

He opened the library door to find me reading Ramon Lully–our friend Dr. X. opened the library door. The Catalan language, however, has the excellence of white wine: Chablis, or good Orvieto. It is like honey from an apple-orchard in mountain country.

'What do you think of Spain . . . of Barcelona', asked the spectacled student at the end of the table. They listened to my reply in frigid silence. Another student approached me after the lesson. 'What do you think of Spain . . .'

'You must understand our history,' he said. He smiled against his trimmed moustache. His hands were in his pockets.

'It is still raining,' I said. The beadle closed the door on the classroom with its blackboard: THIS IS A TABLE THIS IS A DOOR THE DAY IS FINE THAT IS A WOMAN THESE ARE BOYS YOU ARE A STUDENT MY NAME IS RAMON THAT IS A DESK YOU ARE THE TEACHER YOUR NAME IS . . .

HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO OUR TEACHER . . .

Dr. Edoardo X (alias Don John of Austria) said loudly: 'Mr. Chase, we must observe order in our classes. The students expect it . . . Ah, you are speaking Spanish well . . .' (The boy in the bodega taught me Spanish. The language flowed in easily after years in Italy. I had read the poets.)

I kept order in the classes.

How little the ruling classes understand the young! Dr. X (alias the Rector Magnificent to come) believed that 'young Spain' had its fingers on the trigger. There were meetings of students in the mountains. But he had a wary eye on American imports, on foreign newspapers, and on tourism in general. 'Here we can say what we like,' he said, as he folded one long leg over the other. 'A remarkable man . . .' (We knew to whom he referred.) 'You have read Gongorà . . .' (The students knew, like animals, that I was leaving for the sun. They took me out for a drink. Garcia was a name on a book cover on a stand in the Ramblas.

The dead were the dead. They listed their wants: [i] full employment, [ii] a small car, and [iii] foreign travel. I let them pay the bill.)

During my last lesson I told them a story: to 'advanced students' in classroom 12 on the ground floor. But that is of no importance. I had prepared no other material. (It was officially a lesson in 'aural' appreciation of the spoken word. And the story was the story of Dusan–a Slovene refugee whom I had known during the war–who walked from Ljubliana through the Italian and American front-lines just before the breakthrough in Italy. One or two of them understood the content. They all listened attentively. Christmas came within ten days thereafter.)

But someone must have told 'alias' that I was leaving.

It even rained in the story.

Reports of insurrection must have reached him from various sources: the gentleman with the moustache acting as informer. (He had paid for the drinks.)

The 'paternal' system went into action.

'Dusan walked through the mountains . . .' The rhetoric had been made into symbolism.

I wished them a happy Christmas and New Year. (It was clear outside but the wind had risen. By nightfall the rain was again falling on the port and town.)

The station was the proper setting for the 'scene of action'–brief, violent and unexpected. It was an anti-climax. There is no rise or downfall when it rains in a city. Subsequently I realised that it had all happened before (or my fragmented dream-flow had mirrored it into daylight). The man at the hostel telephoned the police. (Dr. X was waiting at the newspaper kiosk, umbrella behind his back. His back was turned to me. The time-table absorbed his interest. He acted his part without rehearsal.) The police advised the University, or rang alias at home. I imagined that his wife answered the telephone in a slip and bedroom slippers. (Intimate detail was necessary to give depth and form.)

'He knows everything,' they said. Day after day they said the same thing.

This was plebeian compliment to the Caudillo.

I was a small spanner within an archaic system of works. (I unfortuna-

tely left my Catalan poets in the hostel in the speed of departur.)

It was raining. The boy was cleaning the bar of the hostel. There was an invitation from a priest who taught in a school: to come and visit him before Christmas. He had been one of my students at my last lesson.

There was money in an envelope from a friend in Italy (the money carefully shielded by coloured paper).

It was seven in the morning.

'*Woman, liar, traitor, deserter, Englishman, dog, cow . . .*' My Spanish (now perfected) took in the monologue on the cold station entrance surrounded by time-tables and clocks at variance. Conventional language had become a world of fantasy. Dr. Edoardo . . . refused my outstretched hand. It dropped into negligence. 'Pay for this borrowed text-book . . .' I paid. I changed the bill at the kiosk and paid. 'You will not reach the frontier . . .' I pointed out with growing self-assurance that my letter of resignation was with the Magnificent Rector–nor was I under legal contract. '*Woman, liar, traitor . . .*' (The Spanish for woman has a tongue-rolling resonance–like the surface of a cow's tongue–that delights. The crowd gathered: porters, passengers, two policemen, a guard, a dog. The dog was attentive.)

'. . . Englishman, dog, cow . . .' (My students could have repeated the words from memory without the blackboard.)

'His brother was famous for his tempers . . .' (His wife had repeated this benediction over struggling Juan being pulled to bed.)

The brother had been shot in the mountains during the Civil War.

Now the porter intervened. He protested.

Alias withdrew. The upraised umbrella was brought to a salute. Then it opened against the rain outside.

'I shall go and consult with my wife,' he said.

The porter led me to the bar for a brandy. He paid. (My hand trembled as I lifted the glass.) I dusted my coat and leaned on my umbrella.

'He's mad . . .,' said the porter. 'It is of no importance . . .'

The two policemen watched me from outside the plate glass of the bar.

'It is of no importance,' said the porter. 'A Professor from the University . . .'

The exactness of the words soothed and comforted me as had the brandy before.

'It is still raining,' I said.

The Catalan countryside rose and fell in neolithic dampness. I ate an omelette and drank red wine in the restaurant car. There was only one other diner; an American going to Marseilles. (I shall forget the Professor Don Juan of Austria, I thought. He is not Napoleon the Fourth. He is a son of a tailor from Burgos, who found employment under the Republican forces. His brother was shot in the mountains. He has no name or face. He is no one, alias a man. He is an actor like any other actor. I am an actor also . . . I picked at my teeth with a pointed toothpick. I was without anxiety and without hunger.) I jotted down the principal facts of the story of Dusan–one day it might make a story or a novella. There was a wet sun shining through the clouds now. Perpignan. Light was returning.

'Woman, liar, traitor, dog, cow . . .' The blackboard words gave intestinal pleasure. I wanted to shout the words aloud in the echoing, smoke-filled station with its iron arches. The words would have gained greater resonance under the vaulting. Then we passed the frontier and customs. I was safe. Perhaps the tale of Dusan and the walk through the mountains might once have had reality, a sense of contact with earth and the war.

I admitted my cowardice. I was a coward. I should have knocked him down on the platform and broken his spectacles.

Water to the right. A grey seaboard and sea.

The train passed the dead countryside of the riders of horses.

The three knotted trellis spires of the Church of Sagrada Famiglia grow over the city of Barcelona. This dead-end work of art was left unfinished.

A View of the Piazza

by Babette Deutsch

Shaking the glory of Heaven from his heels, perhaps an angel
fled to this earth, this Italy, these Venetian
lagoons. Where, in the hilarity of escape, he soon
designed a place to walk in: the piazza,
spacious as (knowing no other) Heaven's courts were spacious.
Beneath the bare azure it lay, as immensely empty.
The piazza was all that was there.

An angel, too, can be lonely.
But the runaway knew what do to: he sang
a Mozartean phrase that peopled the place with doves,
if emblems of Christ, sacred to Aphrodite. Yet the piazza,
for all the froufrou of their fluttering, their rou-cooing, glittered in
sunshine:
empty still. He waited.
Something was wanting there beyond the birds.

And then he remarked the far end of the square.
So surely it was that San Marco sprang to life, winged and a lion
at play with a Byzantine empress, dazzling,
at the far end of the square.
Marble dreaming, mosaic blazing, triumphant bronze,
stone holding ivory's delicacy in derision,
spire on spire, dome smiling on golden dome, gonfalons streaming,
power, opulence, gaiety dancing together:
the vision of a truant angel.

Then the dark chime of the Moors' twin hammers resounded and
like a billow in spume dissolved, where refined planets spangled
the azure, in the zodiac's golden circle;
and above it a lion couchant folded his wings
as if time were no more.
Almost a rebuke, on the right–the stern campanile.

Oh, but he needed more than the doves and the dazzle,
who felt a little the burden of his being
in Venice, on the Piazza di San Marco.
He paced the length and the breadth and again the length of the
piazza, reflecting,
till out of his reflections–as palaces
in Venice rise out of the water–shadows arose,
and multiplying and petrifying and arching
elegantly, formed those lofty arcades
endless and grey as trade,
yet, with Venice glass iridescent as the necks of doves,
with Venice lace, as befits a city that is bride of the sea,
sumptuously graceful.
But the unearthly stranger, he did not know why, dissatisfied, shook
his wings,
putting the doves to frightened flight, who alighted again
before the arcades, croodling and strutting and gleaming.

Then the angel knew what he must do. He sang
a second phrase, if less than Mozartean, festive
as a wedding. It was *Tischlein-deck-dich* on the piazza's
either flank. Parasols, yellow or red or blue or yellow, hugely
sprouted
like mushrooms in a fairy ring; strings being stroked, plucked strings,
decanted music like a light wine, glasses were lifted like singing.
Above,
a sky intensely azure. Beneath it, two or three children scattering
glistening grain to the doves; while at either side the piazza, men
and women,
rosily aureoled, sat at their several tables, in a dream
of a Byzantine empress pavanning with a winged lion, with birds
alighting and flying, with music sparkling like wine, and everyone
rejoicing in the grandly absurd pinnacled marvel, as in the piazza,
immense
as the courts of Heaven.

And the soft and the savage voices of wounds were silent.

Soilure was washed away.
There was no shadow
But the slight shadows of the wings of doves, and the colored
parasols' flanges.
As, in love,
joined pleasures, burning, kindle a universe,
here earth and Italy, Italy and Venice, Venice and her piazza fused,
and from that central splendor shed such light
as, for an hour,
blots out the whole world's night.

The Old Fraud

by James L. Spencer

On the day his son's fine was due Anson McWilliams went down to the courthouse wearing his best gabardine suit and Stetson hat. It was like pushing a mule to get his son to go anywhere with him, and when he could, it was a big event for Anson. He knew that the two of them made a fine sight together–he, six-feet-two, his son an inch taller, but darker and more slender, taking after his dead mother. 'Look out, everybody, here come the McWilliams' boys!' Anson whooped, cuffing Nye down the porch steps and into the Cadillac and slamming the door.

Old Judge Willner sat propped against the wall in the swivel chair behind his desk when Anson shoved Nye into the office. 'This the fella you're after?' Anson yelled.

He winked at Willner and Sheriff Rankin. The three gray-haired men had grown up together. Their youthful adventures, remembered by the whole town, would have made Nye's escapade seem as sinful as a Halloween apple-ducking. Sheriff Rankin sat, squat and bear-like in the overstuffed sofa with horsehair poking through rips in the leather.

'I hear you was flying sort of low, the other night, Nye. I guess you thought you was still in one of those jets.'

The boy answered with a motion of the hand. Whether it meant assent, indifference, or insolence, they could not be sure. Willner and Rankin let it pass. They had seen war do worse than send men home in cranky, difficult states of mind. Willner folded his long, bony hands over his stomach and began to talk. There was no need for a trial among old friends, he said, but Nye had committed a serious offence, and it would not do to set a precedent of leniency for others. Surely he must realize that other young men might follow his example–the son of one of the most influential men in the county. More than this, he said, one of the purposes of the law was to protect the individual from himself. Willner stated the amount of the fine and called the bailiff in from the outer office. Anson peeled bills from his wallet and left the office with his son, a bit more stiffly than he had entered it. He was irritated, not by the fine, but by these final words. Did Willner think the son of Anson McWilliams could not look out for himself at the age of twenty-four?

Outside in the car Anson winked at Nye. The boy had sat through the whole scene in the office as if hearing nothing more important than bird twitter in distant trees. He had been home over two weeks now, his first visit in four years, and Anson could see that he was finding the old town a bit dull after Japan and Korea. What else could explain the fixed boredom in his face? Why else would he avoid all his friends and go tearing about the countryside, drinking alone? When Anson thought, Anson acted. That evening he telephoned Nye's old high school gang and invited them to go hunting on his mountain range, the best game land in three counties. He called Willner and Rankin too. With his old cronies to help him make conversation, Anson thought, he might not seem such a dunce to his own son. When he asked Nye if he would like to go hunting, it was a thing already accomplished. 'We'll take a case of Old Grandad,' he grinned. 'We'll have a hell of a party.'

* * *

Thirty miles into the Cascade Mountains they turned off the deeply rutted dirt road and drove through the main gate of the ranch. As a boy, Nye had seemed to live for the summers in these mountains, the school year being a time of suffering and waiting. Anson watched for signs of the old happiness in the boy's face.

Halfway to the cabin the road was blocked by a fallen pine branch.

They got out to lift it aside. Climbing back into the truck, Anson winced and clapped a hand to the small of his back.

'Old age creeping up,' he grunted. Settling into the cab, he reached for the gearshift. 'Any idea how many years the old man has on him?'

'Pushing sixty, aren't you?'

'That's right,' he was flattered that the boy remembered. 'Time to give the old dog a rest.' He glanced warily, trying to identify his son's mood. How he longed for the old days when Sarah was alive and Nye was a boy and the three of them were always laughing and joking, able to talk about anything that came into their heads.

'Nye,' he said, 'how would you like to take over the ranches? You can have the whole income.' He grinned. 'Think of the hell you could raise on that.'

Nye was looking out the window across the wide canyon. Over there the forest of the government game preserve rolled southward into the blue haze.

'I don't know,' Nye said, 'I think I'll bum around for a while.'

'Bum? –What do you mean?'

'You know. Hitch-hike. Ride the freights.'

Anson's steady humor almost failed him. He would have preferred the helling around, the phone calls from Sheriff Rankin. To tell the truth he was secretly proud of the incident on the highway. The heavy fine was nothing. He could pay one of those every day. It was the speed that scared him. One hundred and fifteen miles an hour at night, Rankin said. What if the boy had blown a tire? Anson could literally see the shredded metal, the blood, the broken face. His big, rough hands tightened for a moment on the steering wheel. My God, his only child. (He would have all new tires put on the Cadillac as soon as he got back to town.)

'Why do you want to ride the freights?'

'I don't know. Maybe I won't. It was just a thought.' After a pause, Nye uncomfortably met his eyes: 'Sorry about the big fine, Pop.'

'Fine be damned!' Anson rumbled, waving an arm. 'Do you think I care about the fine? It's you I'm worried about! How do you think I'd feel if . . .?' He stopped, seeing interest vanish from the boy's face. At times during the past weeks he had wanted to slap that blank, bored expression out of sight. It baffled him. There was no way to get his hands

on it, to fight it or control it. He was not used to the feeling of helplessness.

Nye twisted forward to scratch his back.

'Watch that boulder, Pop,' he said.

Anson snorted and horsed the wheel to keep from smashing a fender. It occurred to him that before the boy went away to college he had been 'Dad', not 'Pop'. It was as if he had been classified with the old man who sat all day on the bench in front of the Greyhound bus depot. He was going to have to make a lot of thunder if he expected to reach this strange son of his as he had once been able to.

The sun was a red ball, low in the sky when they drove up to the cabin in the rocky meadow. The other trucks came to a stop and the clouds of dust drifted away from the road over the boulders and into the scattered oaks and pines. Anson climbed from the cab and waved to the young couples, and to Willner and Rankin in the last truck. He stretched the cramped muscles of his arms and shoulders, and gazed southward across the canyons of his ranch. Long, blue ridges lay parallel like ribs, sloping from the spine of the range high up. Here was rich spring and summer grass for cattle, and under the oaks a heavy scattering of fat brown acorns, the favorite forage of deer. He breathed the mountain air, the sweet smell of the yellow grass, the tang of pines. He had fought bitterly to hold this country during the depression years. To him it was like a child who had nearly died, more loved by the parents for this reason. Anson could not believe in his son's indifference. He thought of it as a temporary perversity, a thing which would pass, maybe with the disturbing memories of the war.

He turned to see the young couples bearing down on Nye. Polly threw herself against the boy with a little cry of pleasure, while Lisa, a thin brown girl, stood shyly aside, waiting to be noticed. Bert pumped his hand, and Orville pounded him on the back. The old town had not been the same, they declared, and where the hell had he been keeping himself? There would be some changes now, all right. Anson beamed as if he were himself the long lost comrade, until Rankin and Willner came up from their truck to shake hands with Nye and to assure him that there were no hard feelings about the fine. The boy shrugged as if he had already forgotten the whole affair, including the fine and the lecture, and maybe even the sheriff and the judge too. When they turned

away, he picked up his rifle and set out by himself down the path to the cabin.

Anson started as a hand fell on his shoulder.

'Don't worry about him, Anse,' Willner was saying. 'He'll be all right.'

'Don't worry about what?' Anson flared. 'What the hell do you mean?' He twisted to see Willner's long face under the shock of white hair. 'Do you expect him to fall all over you, after arresting him and hauling him into court before the whole town? Who would he have hurt if he'd cracked up . . . except himself?' He stood, in dull anger, while Willner smiled and waved one hand at him in a gesture of hopelessness, and walked away.

The young people carried boxes and guns and sleeping bags down to the cabin. Polly began sweeping the board floor, and Lisa made a fire in the old woodstove. Orville backed the horses out of the trailer and led them to the barn and fed them while Bert chopped wood. Anson went about for a time, examining corrals and cattle chutes and outbuildings. His anger with his old friend gradually faded. Anson was a humorous, affable man, except when he was crossed, and then, it was said in the county, he could be as dangerous as a sidewinder. But his anger, if keen, passed quickly. Coming back to the cabin he heard voices, and Nye's laughter. The sound stopped him briefly outside the door. His throat tightened. He wanted suddenly to laugh, himself. He leaped through the doorway to find Nye and Polly alone.

'Jokes, eh?' he roared, as if he had caught them in some scandalous act.

They stared.

'Come on,' he said. 'Out with it. Making fun of the old man?'

'It wasn't anything,' Nye said.

'Oho!' Anson's eyes cornered them at opposite ends of the stove. 'Secrets, eh?'

Polly stirred a pot vigorously with a large, wooden spoon.

'We were talking about old times, Anson. In high school.'

'Old times, eh?' He leered. 'What's Orville going to say about these old times you can't tell me about? Eh? What's Orville going to say?'

Polly raised a lid and smiled into another of the pots. She was very shapely in her tight levis.

'Who's going to *tell* Orville, Anson?'

He could have made his will over to her at that moment for playing his game. He laughed, triumphantly. 'Got you worried, eh?' He ducked his head like a fighter and sidled toward his son. He made a feint, and his outstretched fingers caught the boy in the ribs. 'You'd better tell me,' he said, poking, 'Tell me, what's the story?'

The boy smiled, and put his hands up to defend himself, half-heartedly.

'Come on, Pop,' he mumbled.

'Come on, yourself,' Anson yelled, elated beyond reason. It seemed as if he and his son had not laughed together since Nye was a small boy. 'Come on, yourself!' he shouted, poking harder and beginning to chase the boy as he retreated across the room. 'Tell me!' he commanded, feinting and poking and running around Nye to block the doorway. 'What's the joke?'

Nye stopped and began guarding his ribs with more effect.

'Oh, for Christ's sake, Pop. Grow up, will you? You wouldn't even think it was funny.'

Anson dropped his arms and threw back his head and laughed from deep in his belly. 'I wouldn't, eh? Old times, eh? You think the old man doesn't know about old times?' He caught the boy's eye and slapped his shoulder. 'O.K.,' he said. 'Enough is enough. A joke is a joke.' He put up a big hand and stamped to a chair, breathing heavily. His old heart was not as vigorous as it had once been. He winked at Polly and leaned the camp chair on its hind legs and began to rock gently back and forth. 'Grow up, eh?' he chuckled softly to himself. Telling the old man to grow up. There was a bit of spirit for you. This was more like the son of Anson McWilliams speaking. At the same time he measured the boy with his eye. It had been a long time since he'd taken talk like that from anyone.

After dinner they built a fire in a cleared space outside the cabin. Anson opened the whiskey and mixed it with cold spring water and passed it around in enamelled cups. The young people had started talking about the war.

'War?' Orville was saying. 'I'll go, anytime. I like war.'

They laughed.

'No kidding,' he said. 'I had a ball.' He stood leaning against a chest-high boulder and his eyes were humorous slits.

'Oh, you,' Polly scoffed. 'You spent the war on your behind, chauffeuring generals around.'

'That's what I mean,' Orville said. 'I had a ball.'

She was sitting on the ground near him. With a little show of exasperation she reached over and pinched his leg. He slid his foot under her thigh and flipped her over on her side without effort. There was more laughter. Orville was famous for his strength. He was always pulling doorknobs off and denting cars with his fist. In college football he had a famous trick for blocking punts. He would pick up the first man who got in his way and throw him at the kicker. Polly got up and moved a few feet away and sat down again.

'You ought to be ashamed,' she said.

Orville looked owlish.

'I am.'

'Running around boozing it up,' she said, disgustedly, 'while other people were at the front, getting killed.'

Orville took a drink and studied the contents of his cup. He did not seem so amused, now.

Nye stirred on his log near the fire.

'Hell,' he said, 'I would have traded places with him.'

'Oh, you would have, would you?' Anson said. He winked at Rankin and Willner and the others to show that his son was merely joking. 'Anyway,' he added, 'I don't suppose Orville had much to say about where he was assigned, did you, Orville?'

'That's right. That's the way the army's run. Hell, they had guys up at the front who couldn't see twenty feet in front of them.'

'What would you know about it?' Polly said.

The others looked vaguely away. Anson took a fresh quart of whiskey from the case and twisted the cap off. 'Drink up, everybody,' he said. Orville's loud talk was beginning to aggravate him. How unfair that Orville should be so ready to shoot off his mouth about his ridiculous army career while Anson could not get a word out of his own son about the war. If it had not been for the radio and newspapers Anson would have heard nothing at all about the Migs Nye shot down in Korea. The least the boy could do would be to allow his father and his friends a small share in his victories.

'Tell us about those Migs, Nye.'

'Well . . .,' the boy said, frowning into the fire, appearing to grope backward into memories . . . 'They had wings.'

Everyone laughed, except Anson. Was Nye making fun of him? Anger rumbled in his head, and then died. Maybe he had misunderstood. He turned to Willner and Rankin with a smile.

'You know,' he said, 'these kids go over there and kill forty of fifty Chinamen with a sharp rock and come home and won't even tell the old man about it. I guess they think we've never seen a dead man.'

Rankin chuckled.

'My kid's the same way, Anse. You'd think he was ashamed of it.'

'I'm not.' Orville's head tipped back, insolently. 'I didn't kill no Chinamen to be ashamed of. I killed a lot of bottles of Old Crow, though.' Anson gazed coldly across the fire. Who was Orville anyway? A football bum, with a neck as thick as his head. During the late summer and the fall of three successive years Orville's name had blatted from radio speakers in town every hot Saturday afternoon. *Whitaker has the ball, he's fading back for a pass . . .* Or, *He's going all the way it's a touchdown for Washington, Whitaker does it again!* Orville had been the bad boy and the hero of the league. He got in fights on the field and was benched, and the team lost without him. He broke up bars once in a while, and whenever he did, the valley newspapers advertised it in headlines, more proud than outraged. The papers gave Orville more news space for a tavern brawl than they had given Nye when he shot down those Migs in Korea. He'd killed a lot of bottles of Old Crow, had he? A withering answer began to form in Anson's mind, but Willner spoke first.

'I guess there's nothing to be ashamed of,' he said, 'in six Sabrejets diving on thirty or forty Migs.'

'Thirteen,' Nye said.

'Thirteen!' Anson said, incredulously. 'The papers said it was thirty or forty!' Actually, Anson did not remember what the papers had said. Anson himself had been the source of that figure–he had told the story so many times, using the numbers thirty or forty, that it had come to seem the truth. What difference did a few planes make, one way or the other? Anson stamped indignantly about the fire.

'By God, that's what the papers said,' he insisted.

'The papers were wrong, then,' Nye said. 'It was thirteen.'

'Well', Willner said, taking his old, blackened briar from his mouth, 'I guess even with the odds at two-to-one it was a bit risky, wasn't it, Nye?'

'Oh, it wasn't much.'

'Wasn't much, hell!' Anson exploded. 'Is that what that Silver Star and that Distinguished Flying Cross and that Purple Heart and those five Air Medals were for?' He looked angrily about. There was a thickness in his throat, and he did not trust himself to speak farther.

'Those Chinese pilots weren't much,' Orville said. 'Most of them only had about six months' training.'

Anson spun around.

'What do you know about it, Orville?'

'About as much as you do, I guess,' Orville said, almost happily.

Anson did not want to spoil the party, but he had been insulted in public. It was not often that his word was doubted. People were in the habit of listening to Anson McWilliams, a man who owned perhaps a sixth of the area of the county, a man whom people consulted before they bought land, drilled a well, planted a crop for the first time or ran for office.

'Are you calling me a liar?' he said.

Nye looked up, blankly.

'What are you getting sore about? Orville's right. Most of them were lousy pilots.'

'What am I getting sore about? I'll tell you what I'm getting sore about. There's been just too damn much of this talk lately about how good our equipment is and how good our soldiers are, and how much inferior the other fellow is, and one of these days we're going to wake up and find out we've been a lot of conceited fools, that's what I'm getting sore about. This nation's never been whipped yet, but that doesn't mean that it can't *be* whipped.' He ended this declaration, huffing indignantly. Nye stared, plainly skeptical of his father's concern for the welfare of the nation.

'Then why didn't you say so in the first place, instead of getting on Orville's back?'

'He has a strong back,' Anson grinned at Orville, who did not smile, and at the others, who did not meet his eyes. Anson would not have expected his old friends to hide at the first sound of trouble. Well, that's

too bad, he thought, sobering . . . If a man couldn't blow off a bit of steam at his own fire, drinking his own whiskey, without embarassing somebody, that was just too bad. He gained a deep satisfaction from the knowledge that he and his son did not have to cater to any of them, not even to Willner and Rankin. He picked up the bottle and refilled his cup. He felt inclined to give another little speech. It would amuse him to see how they took this one.

'Talk is cheap,' he said. 'I've noticed that the people who didn't do any of the fighting are always the ones who seem to know most about how the war is run.'

'It didn't take any genius to figure out how the war was run,' Orville said.

'Apparently not,' Anson said.

A faint breeze stirred the dry grass among the rocks. An owl hooted in a distant clump of trees. Nye stood up at the fire and came over to peer into his father's face.

'What the hell is the matter with you?'

Anson gaped, innocently.

'Do I act as if something's the matter with me?' He looked around at the others, appealing to their judgement.

'If I was Orville, I'd belt you one.'

'Oh, yeah? And what would you *do* if Orville belted me one?' He winked at Willner and Rankin. Nye glared, but did not answer.

'Come on,' Anson said, 'what would you do? Just stand there and let him heave me into the canyon?'

'I ought to,' Nye growled.

'O.K. You ought to. Would you?' He waited. 'What do I have to do to find out? Make Orville start swinging?'

Nye threw a wild glance around at the others as if appealing to them to have patience with his father, for he was a demented old man. 'Excuse me,' he said. 'I think I'll take a walk.'

Anson stared at the plaid pattern of Nye's shirt merging into darkness at the edge of the firelight. It was not as if he had made the boy fight. All Nye had had to do was to show the slightest willingness, the slightest concern. That was all that Anson had wanted, and apparently the boy could not do it, not even here, among his father's old friends. It seemed such a small thing. Why was it so difficult? Suddenly Anson felt very

tired and alone. What was it all for–all this land and money and the respect of the community and his struggle over the years? He might as well will everything to a total stranger.

'Never mind,' he barked at Nye, who was lifting a bottle out of the case to take with him. Anger gave his voice its old strength. 'Don't break up the party on my account. I was just going to take a walk, myself.'

They were silent as he stalked away from the firelight and up the path to the cabin. He closed the door and bolted it, and sat down. He thought of the years of worry and care, bringing the boy up after Sarah had died. Nye had hardly ever been out of his sight except at school, and even then he was under the watchful eyes of teachers who reported to Anson every week. They had been rewarded well for this extra trouble. There had always been a case of the best whiskey under their Christmas tree, and the most expensive perfume for the wife. The results spoke for themselves. Anson was as proud of his son as if he had himself pushed the trigger in the cockpit of Nye's fighter that morning high in the sky over the jagged mountains of North Korea. But what was in it for himself. Where was his reward for being father and mother to the boy? Or for twenty-four years of incessant worry? Or for backing out of a second marriage at the last minute because it did not seem right to let another woman bring up his and Sarah's child? As nearly as he could tell, his son hated him. What was the point of it all?

There was a knocking at the door. Anson looked up and stared dully at the rough boards. The knocking came again.

'Hey, Pop, are you in there?'

Anson did not answer. He could hear the boy breathing, just beyond the boards.

'Pop? Hey!' Anson could hear a ring of anger in the voice now. Let him get angry, Anson thought. It seemed to be his natural state. Maybe it would make him happy.

The pounding on the door was very loud now.

'Godammit, Pop,' Nye yelled, 'I know you're in there, if you're in there, open up! What's the matter, anyway?' This time there was uncertainty in the boy's voice, and even . . . could it be . . . fear? Anson slowly leaned forward in his chair, listening, not breathing. He's *worried,* Anson thought, incredulous. He's worried about *me*! There was

a sound of running footsteps and then the old door crashed, splintering around the hinges, making Anson's heart jump and hammer. At the second blow the hinges burst loose and the door flew inward and swung half around and came loose from the latch and crashed to the floor in a cloud of dust.

Nye stood, panting, blinking, white-faced, his long legs astride the broken door.

'You old fraud,' he snarled.

Anson sat, still as a mouse, not trusting himself to speak.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

GIORGIO CAPRONI, born in Livorno, 1912, lives in Roma and is a frequent contributor to various literary periodicals. He has published several volumes of poetry.

VINCENZO CARDARELLI, 1887-1959, had a long and active literary career. He founded the Review *La Ronda* in 1919, with Baldini, Bacchelli, Cecchi and Montano; published many volumes of poetry and was appointed editor of *La Fiora Litteraria* in 1949.

RICHARD CHASE is an English novelist, poet and playwright living in Italy.

ALFRED CHESTER, born in Brooklyn, 1928, has published three novels. His short stories have appeared in many magazines and anthologies.

BABETTE DEUTSCH, distinguished American poet and critic, figures in nearly all anthologies of modern verse in English and has published many volumes in England and America, including *Coming of Age: New and Selected Poems, Poetry in our Time* and *Poetry Handbook.*

RICHARD FARINA is a recent graduate of Cornell University where his poetry appeared in *Epoch.*

KAFFE FASSETT who comes from Big Sur, California, is currently working in New York.

ALFONSO GATTO; born Salerno, 1909, belongs to an old Calabrese family of sailors and ship-owners. Was editor with Pratolini of *Campo di Marto* in Florence, 1938; now lives in Milan.

SATO HARUO, Japanese poet and novelist, was born in 1892. His most famous work is *Pastoral Melancholy* (1919). The story published in this issue is typical of his vein of lyrical fantasy.

JEAN-CLAUDE van ITALLIE, an associate editor of *Transatlantic Review* was born in Brussels, received a B.A. from Harvard in 1958 and is currently writing in New York City.

PENNY JACKSON is young American doing post-graduate work at Heidelberg. *Rites of Spring* is her first published story.

RAYMOND LEE was a child star in films from 1915-27, working with such immortals as D. W. Griffith, the Gish Sisters and Charlie Chaplin. Has been writer, director and television producer; also editor of *Offbeat Magazine.*

KIMON LOLOS, a native of Salonika and a graduate of Athens University, now teaches in California. His first novel in English, *Respite,* is ready for publication in New York and London; his first story in English appeared in *Transatlantic Review.*

GOFFREDO PARISE, born Vicenzo, 1929, is now living in Rome. He has published four novels which have received great critical acclaim. The story translated in this issue appeared in *Tempo Presento* and was later dramatised for the Piccolo Teatro in Milan.

SALVATORE QUASIMODO, the famous Italian poet and critic, was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1959. Earlier awards include the International Etna-Taormina Prize with Dylan Thomas (1953) and the Viareggio Prize in 1958. He is a Sicilian, born in Syracuse in 1901, and worked for ten years as a civil engineer in various parts of Italy before he finally settled in Milan.

UMBERTO SABA, 1883–1957, was born in Trieste and published his first collection of poems in 1921. During World War II he had to quit Trieste and go into hiding in Florence, afterwards returning to Trieste, where he died.

OWEN SCOTT, who did the covers for *Transatlantic Review*, Nos 6 & 7 worked in New York as a designer and has now come to Europe.

VITTORIO SERENI, born 1913, was taken prisoner of war in 1943 and spent two years in concentration camps in Algeria and French Morocco. He now lives in Milan and is a director of the publishing house of Mondadori. His work includes translations from Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams.

LEONARDO SINISGALI, born 1908, was formerly director of the Olivetti technical publicity department. Is now a publicity consultant; editor of the review *Civilta della Macchine* and has published several volumes of poetry.

JAMES SPENCER, Scientific Editor at Stanford Research Institute, lives in California and has published poetry in the *San Francisco Review* and other magazines, also short stories and an essay in *Modern Fiction Studies* (1958).

MAX STEELE won the Harper Prize Novel Contest in 1950 with his first novel *Debby* and is an advisory editor on the *Paris Review*. His short stories have appeared in *Harper's Atlantic Monthly*, the *New Yorker*, etc. and he is now working on a second novel.

ROSEMARY TONKS was born in London, where she lives and works. She has published two children's books, poetry in the *London Magazine*, *Adam*, and elsewhere, including an earlier number of *Transatlantic Review*.

TU FU, 712–770 A.D. is the poet-sage of China. Chao-Tse-chiang, formerly Professor of Literature, Kuomin University, Canton, has translated a number of his poems, some of which have appeared in the *Chicago Magazine*.

GIUSEPPE UNGARETTI was born in Alexandria of Italian parents in 1888; fought in France and Italy during the First World War, then went to South America to teach Italian literature at the University of Sao Paulo, Brazil. He has

published many volumes of verse and is considered one of the most representative Italian poets of today.

EUGENE WALTER, an associate editor of *Transatlantic Review* lives in Rome, and is novelist, editor and critic.

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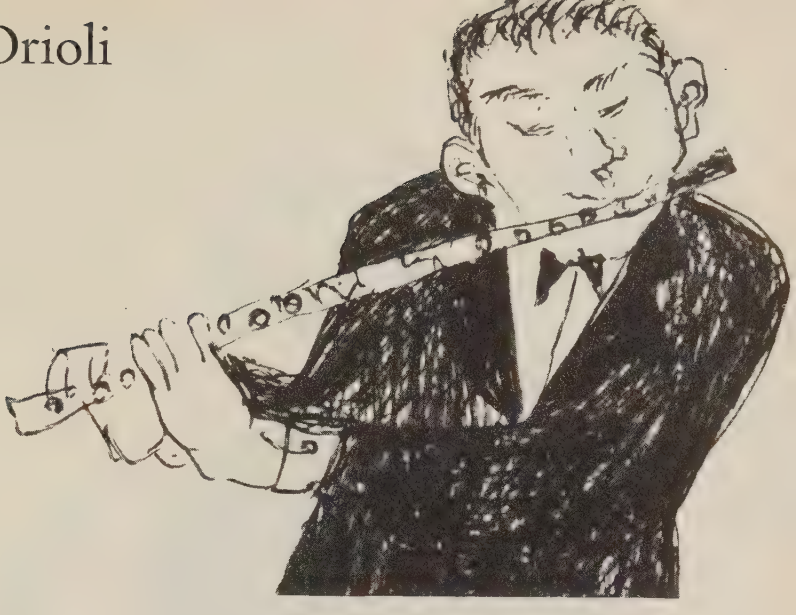

Nora Orioli was born in Poli in 1925, raised in Venice where she studied for four years with Prof. Cadorin at the Accademia di Belle Arti. But her development as an artist began after her formal studies ended, and when she withdrew into a tiny Roman rooftop studio for long, patient, and exacting daily work entirely by herself. Her first solo show was in 1953 in Rome, shows in Milan, Paris, and Bâle followed, and in 1958 she was given an imposing exhibition in the new Olivetti Cultural Center at Ivrea. Slowly and surely discerning collectors began to nose her out, in spite of the fact that she is represented by no gallery, has no agent, and is outside the currently fashionable Italian 'schools'. Her humorous line and representation of character are more Hogarthian than anything else; have only a distant kinship with the Roman gift for caricature. Her paintings are muted in colour, severe in composition – usually a small canvas containing a single meditative figure, such as a fisherman, a laborer, an office-worker going home on a bicycle, a house-maid going to meet her lover. And again, Orioli is outside the usual: the impulse which informs her pictures has nothing but nothing to do with the trite 'social consciousness' of the 30's or of the various official cultures, whether W.P.A. or Commintern. The human pageant is her field, the depiction entirely her own. Her studio is at 11 via Tibullo in Rome, telephone 3562941, and its' the only place to see her pictures, other than the Barrack Gallery in Wichita Falls, Texas. But go alone! there's only room for one person after the artist and the pictures. And take 5-lira pieces for the coin-in-the-slot elevator to the roof. And prepare to enjoy some witty, unexpected work. E.W

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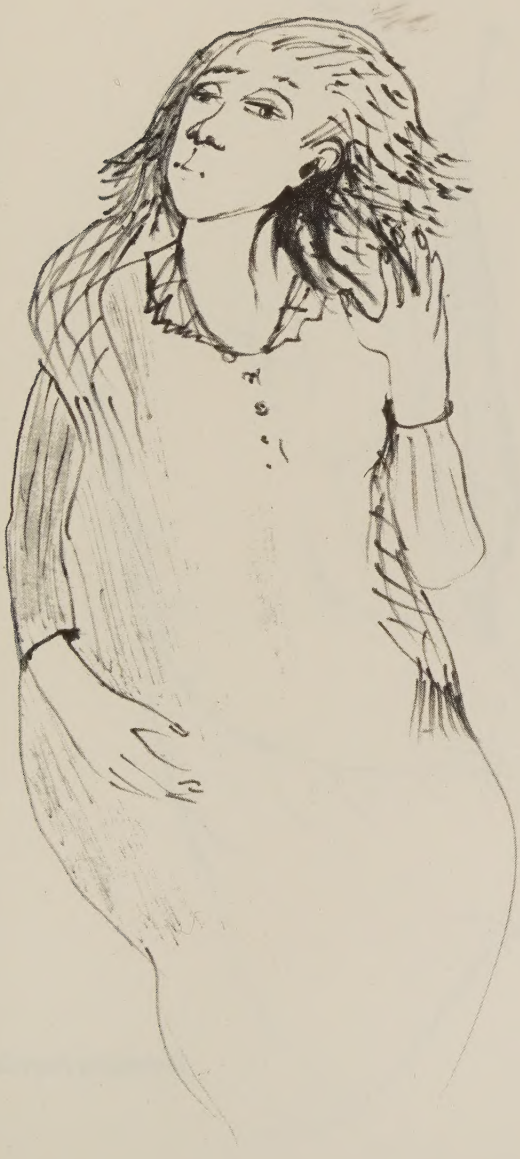

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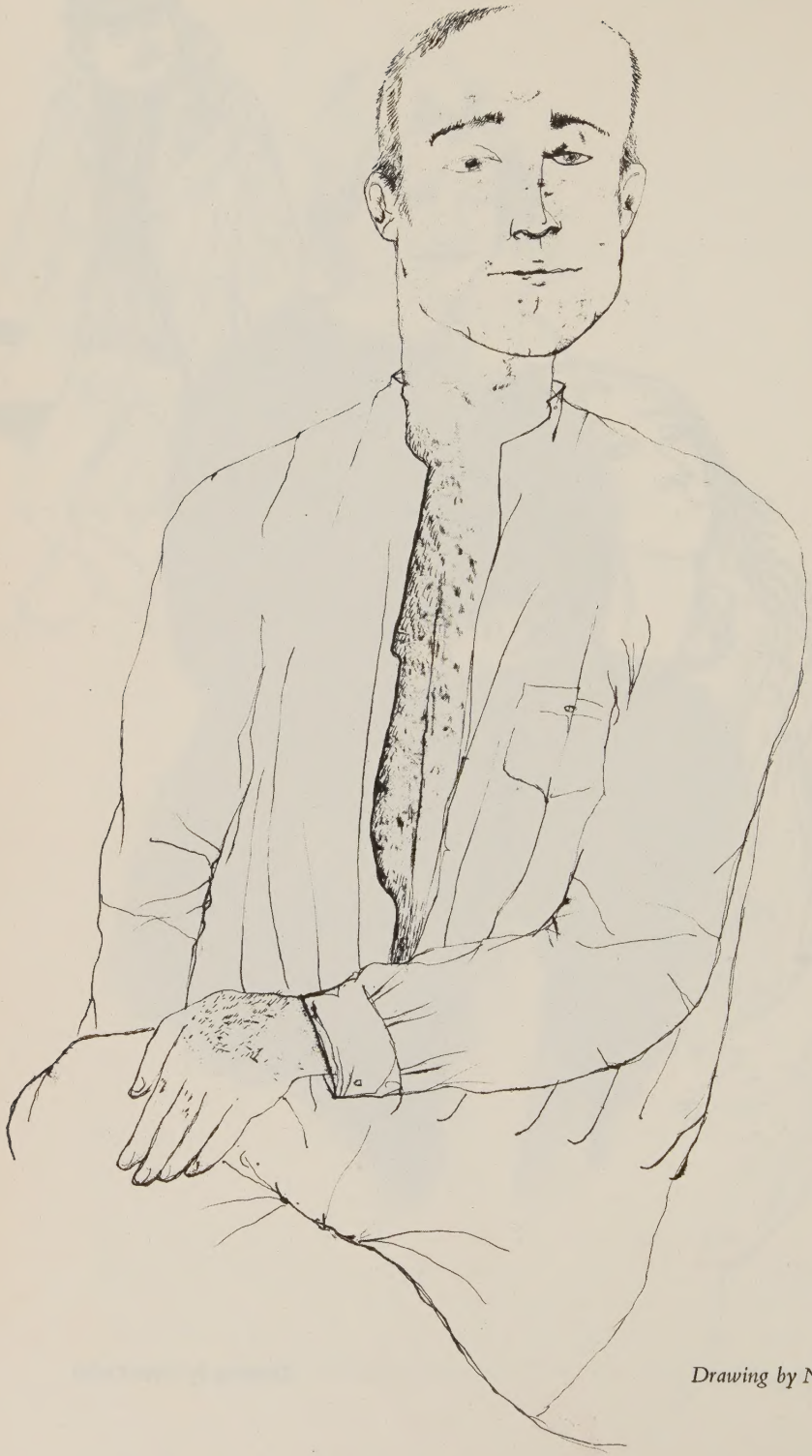

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